THE

PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT;

OR,

PERSECUTION IN THE AGE OF LOUIS XV.

PART I.—A SERMON AT COURT.
PART II.—A SERMON IN THE CITY.
PART III.—A SERMON IN THE DESERT.

From the French of

L. BUNGENER,

AUTHOR OF "THE PREACHER AND THE KING," ETC.

In Two Volumes.

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PREFACE

BY

THE TRANSLATOR.

After the very favorable reception of the "Preacher and the King," it seems altogether unnecessary to preface the present work by any account of its purpose or merits.

It may, however, be well to inform the reader that in a communication lately received from the author, Monsieur Bungener, a minister of the Reformed Church of Geneva—not France, as was stated in the preface to the preceding work—he informs the translator that his works have been conceived upon the plan of exhibiting in a series, the principal religious aspects of France, from the age of Louis XIV., to the close of the last century.

The first of the series is already in the hands of American readers; the second is now presented to them in these volumes; the third, entitled *Voltaire and his Times*, is about to be published in England, and the last, *Julian, or the End of a Century*, we hope, in due time, to add to the number of American books. The author has not yet quite completed this last work.

He will thus have brought out, in his very graphic and popular manner, the state and relations of French Protestantism from the time immediately preceding the revocation of the Nantz Edict, down to the beginning of our own times.

The early portions of this eventful history are more familiar to us than the events which followed the worst severities of the persecution. The history of Protestantism in the South of France, after its decimation by the confiscations, violent conversions, exiles and death inflicted in the time of Louis XIV., is but little known. The author aims to revive the men and incidents of those periods which followed the atrocious dragonnades. He

carries us into the remoter parts of Languedoc, known as "the Desert," the last stronghold in which the Protestants defied their relentless persecutors.

From the lips of old Reboul, one of the characters of the present work, we have a bold and faithful sketch of the sufferings and enthusiastic fervors which characterized the Camisard war. Hunted like wild beasts, and deprived of their spiritual guides, the desperation of these unhappy, proscribed beings took the form of frenzy, and at the bidding of enthusiasts, performed wonderful feats of valor indeed, but at the expense of the intelligent scriptural principles of their religion. The consequence was a total and wide-spread disorganization.

One of the most interesting portions of the present work, is that relating to the vast labors of Antoine Court, one of the very few pastors left in France, and called of God, while still very young, to the great work of calming and reorganizing the disturbed elements of Protestantism.

It is shortly after the period of his labors, that our

story commences. Paul Rabaut is now the leading spirit of the French churches, and in his movements, and the fate of those connected with him, lies a great part of the interest of this work.

How the author has succeeded in interweaving and delineating the details of martyrdom—as in the deaths of Rochette and Calas—in introducing the champions of infidelity, with their principles, and the consequences of their principles—as in the scenes concerning Helvétius, Diderot, and the others who were then beginning their bitter and systematic assaults against the first principles of religion—in contrasting these with the simple, yet thoughtful and dignified belief of Rabaut and his companions—in depicting the wonderful inconsistencies and disorganization of the political and financial state of the period—in bringing together Rabaut, the Huguenot, and Bridaine, the priest, putting into their mouths the main principles on either side of the great controversy—in short, how he has succeeded in laying a great portion of the age before us, it is for the reader to pronounce.

It is a recommendation of these works, that they present these principal points of controversy in a succinct and popular form, and in a candid and liberal spirit. The extreme gentleness of the writer must be obvious. He leaves his facts to speak, rarely indulging in a sarcasm, and scarcely ever uttering the vehement indignation which the atrocious oppressions and monstrous doctrines of popery would justify.

The character of that great anti-christian system has not changed with time. It has been in a measure deprived of power, that is all. Wherever power remains in its possession, it is still employed, as formerly, in imprisoning and exiling its victims, as well as in exercising upon them many lesser forms of tyranny and violence.

Our own day furnishes proofs enough of this. Madeira and Tuscany have furnished many martyrs in this nineteenth century.

To keep out thought by penal restrictions, and when it enters, to cast it out with violence, is the purpose of

Romanism, very candidly avowed by some of its adherents, even in our own free land. It is not accidentally but constitutionally intolerant. Every contribution to the evidence which proves this, is invaluable, and we are grateful for the fidelity and earnestness with which our author lends his aid.

The translator has only to add that her task has been pleasant, but not unattended with anxiety, lest she should fail in her aim to render the author's meaning with scrupulous fidelity, and yet at the same time to preserve the peculiar vivacity which forms so striking a characteristic of the French style of thought and expression.

M. E.

New York, October, 1853.

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PART I.

A SERMON AT COURT.

I.

A TRAVELLER.

One day, towards the end of July, in the year 1760, a priest might have been seen proceeding with rapid steps towards one of the doors of the cathedral of Meaux.

He wore a travelling dress, broad-brimmed hat, small bands, brown cloak, gaiters and dusty shoes. His figure was tall and erect; his eye quick and intelligent, although set beneath a somewhat low forehead, and his physiognomy rather rugged than grave. It was impossible at this moment to decide whether he was agitated, or only hurried.

However, a few steps from the door, a more decided emotion began to be visible in his countenance; he slackened his pace involuntarily; his eyes were turned towards the interior of the church, and seemed already to seek something there. As he was about to cross the threshold,

"Charity! Monsieur l'Abbé!" said one of the numerous beggars, kneeling or sitting, according to custom, on each side of the entrance.

And as the abbé appeared neither to hear nor see him, he repeated, "Charity!"

His tone, in spite of a tolerably marked Southern accent, was proud and short; he did not beg—he demanded. It was like a profound indignation, seeking an occasion to burst forth. Accordingly, whispers were exchanged by the other mendicants.

"He is crazy, that man," said a woman. "Is that the way to talk?"

"And to a priest!" said another. "And the first day, too!" murmured a blind man. The priest had heard these last words as he turned. He cast upon the beggar first an unobserving, and then a more attentive look.

"Do I understand aright that it is thy first day?" he said. "Thou dost not yet know how to beg—"

"I know that I am hungry, and that—"

"Thou art hungry?"

"Yes."

"Thou liest!"

"I—"

"Thou liest, I tell thee!"

And the bold beggar cast down his eyes.

"Thou art not hungry," resumed the priest, slowly, "and thou art not what thou—"

The beggar started, and at his frightened look, the priest interrupted himself. "Wait for me here," he said to him; "I wish to speak with thee." And he disappeared within the church.

II.

BOSSUET'S TOMB.

He had taken only a few steps, when he stopped, as if he did not know which way to turn. The church was deserted

and gloomy, for night was coming on. No sounds were heard, save here and there the murmured prayers of some women, kneeling in the chapels and beside the columns.

Perceiving no one who appeared able to guide him in his search, he went straight on, and after kneeling rapidly, with a sign of the cross, upon the first step of the high altar, he turned to the left, and began to read, while he walked on, the monumental inscriptions which covered the walls and pavement. It grew darker and darker, and at each tomb he was obliged to stoop lower than before. His impatience accordingly increased at every step. One would have said that he was irritated at these dead, known or unknown, who came so inopportunely to place themselves between him and the object of his search.

At length he stopped abruptly. Behind the high altar, against the wall, on a marble tablet, upon which a mitre was executed in relief above some books of tolerably good design, he had perceived these words:

"Hic quiescit resurrectionem expectans,
Jacobus Benigni Bossuet,
Episcopus Meldensis;
Serenissimi Delphini præceptor;
Universitatis Parisiensis
Privilegiorum apostolicorum conservator;
Collegii Regii Navarræ superior.
Obiit Anno Domini MDCCIV.
Annos natus LXXVI.
Requiescat in pace."*

* "Here rests, awaiting the resurrection, James Benignus Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, preceptor of his serene highness the Dauphin, preserver of the apostolical privileges of the University of Paris, and superior of the Royal College of Navarre. Died in the year of our Lord 1704, at the age of 76. May he rest in peace."

The priest had not gone beyond the second line. What were these titles, these dates, to him? He was only seeking a name, and this name he had found; his eyes were fixed upon it. It might have been imagined, that through the stone he perceived the well-known features of him whose resting place was pointed out by this marble.

"Yes," he murmured, "*hic quiescit*—he is there—*quiescit.* I love the word, *he rests.* He has all eternity to rest in, as he said to his friends, to Arnauld and Nicole, when they counselled him to take a little rest in this world. *He rests!* After sixty years of labor, this word is a complete eulogy. If it be written one day on my tomb, will it be there also an eulogy? Will it be said—but let men say what they will. What difference does it make to him who is lying there what I am saying about this epitaph? But Thou, O God! what wilt Thou say? Wilt Thou find that I have fulfilled my task? *Quiescit.* He is there."

He reached out his hand towards the marble; he seemed expecting to feel it soften beneath his fingers.

"Does he see me?" he resumed. "Am I permitted to think that my labors, that—but no. Back, self, back! While I am here, almost on my knees before his tomb, behold my pride, which follows me even into the presence of the glory before which I seem to humiliate myself! Even beside these ashes, which teach me also the nothingness of man, I asked if he sees me, hears me! Thus it is: it is not enough that we are seen and heard by the living; we wish also to be seen and heard by the dead. Ah! poor wretched heart! After having preached so long to others, am I no further advanced myself! Who, then, will preach to me? Alas! and he also—how often has he sought his own glory, believing all the while that he was seeking that of God alone!"

He ceased, and after a long silence, he continued:

"Fearful thought, that for forty, fifty, sixty years, a man may seem to be laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of his brethren, and in all these years God may not find *one* which has been completely and sincerely given to Him! To think that dying, a man may find himself rejected at the day of judgment as an unfaithful servant! How is it now with him? Has God presented this fearful account to him? *He rests*,—men have written here. What do they know of it?"

Then, returning to the first reflections which had been awakened by the mortal remains of Bossuet, he exclaimed:

"He who said so eloquently, 'Come, see all that remains of so much greatness and so much glory,' he has now been for nearly sixty years outside of that dread portal whose terrors he described. It is he who is now 'that nameless something for which men have no designation in any language.' O! my God, however eloquent may have been the voices in this world which have spoken of eternity, how much more eloquent are they when they become silent! What a pulpit is the tomb! What an orator is death! And he, he is there—there, underneath my feet. If I should raise this stone, I should see him."

III.

THE UNKNOWN.

"You would not see him," said a voice.

It was not that of the beggar; but its accent was so similar, that the priest, who was moreover startled, was deceived.

"Thou here?" he said, turning quickly. But immediately he resumed, "Pardon me; I thought—"

He who interrupted him was also in travelling costume, large hat, dusty gaiters and shoes, and black cloak. His complexion, deeply embrowned, denoted that he was an inhabitant of the country; but his bearing was easy and noble. Although he appeared not more than forty years of age, his hair was nearly white.

"I ought to ask your pardon," he said; "I have broken in upon your meditations."

"I was speaking almost aloud," said the priest; "you heard me?"

"A few words—the last. I comprehended that you believe yourself at the tomb of the former bishop of Meaux, and—"

"Am I not? And this epitaph?"

"It only remained twenty years on the tomb of Bossuet. The cardinal de Bissy had the front of the high altar repaired in 1724. The monumental stones were taken away, and put here. The body of Bossuet then remained—"

"Where? You know the spot?"

"There, before the first step—"

"There, you say? At the very spot where I kneeled just now!"

He hastened thither. Nothing was there to indicate a tomb; squares of white and green marble covered the whole space comprised between the altar and the grating of the choir.

"Thus it is all through life," said the new comer. "We pass by the truth without knowing it, and go to pay homage to that which has only its appearance."

"Yes," added the priest; "and, unfortunately, that appearance often possesses a charm over which it is difficult for truth itself to triumph. In fact, I am almost sorry that you have undeceived me. Bossuet has said to me there, where he is not, all that he had to say. It is immaterial to me that

he is in *reality* here; for my imagination and heart he is still there."

And he went to give a last look at the epitaph. The unknown followed him.

"After all," said the latter, "if the spirit of Bossuet be anywhere in this church, it is neither here, nor yet over there. You know that our spirits, according to the poets, most willingly haunt those places which were during life our favorites. If Bossuet should become visible, see where I think he would appear to us."

And he pointed to the pulpit, which was visible in the distance between the columns and the nave.

The priest shook his head.

"You think so?" he said. "I think he would be very ill satisfied to find himself there, unless God gave him the power to drive out of it the preachers of the day, or to inspire them with a very different eloquence."

"It is precisely what I thought just now, as I passed this pulpit," said the unknown. "I know but little of the preachers of the day, but it appears that there are some of them whom Bossuet would scarcely own as his disciples. Affectation, tinsel, many words and few ideas, abundance of philosophy, and scarcely any Christianity—"

"*Scarcely* any? Say rather *none*—"

"Willingly; but I did not venture—"

"Why?"

"Your dress—"

"My dress is a livery which cannot prevent my censuring those who degrade it."

"Your frankness does you credit, and you must have but too many occasions for exercising it. Yes, as you say, evangelical traditions have become more and more extinct among

your preachers. You have, it is said, but one who has escaped the decline, and who may still be cited as a truly Christian orator. I have heard him once, and—"

"Who is it?"

If the church had not been so dark, he to whom this question was addressed would have seen that the eyes of the priest sparkled with a sudden light; a slight color tinged his cheek, and his hand trembled.

"Who is it?" he repeated.

"Father—wait—oh, Father Bridaine."

"Ah! Father Bridaine—yes, I believe I have heard him."

"What did you think of him?"

"I like your fancy," said the priest, half absently, and as if wishing to change the subject; "yes, the shade of Bossuet in this pulpit. I believe, in fact, that if I were to remain here an hour or two alone, in the evening.—as now,—among these tombs, enveloped in the solemn twilight, my imagination, the shadows—"

"Well, what?"

"Do not laugh, I believe I should finish by seeing him. I should see him slowly advance. He would glide there, past the columns. No noise,—on the contrary, he would seem to bring silence with him, as the night now brings it to us. Behind him, before him, the shadows would darken, but I should still see him. At least I should see naught but him. He would mount into the pulpit—ha! good God!"

"What is the matter?"

"There!—see!"

IV.

REHEARSAL OF A SERMON.

The priest stood amazed and motionless, his arm still extended in the direction of the pulpit. The shades of night had completely enveloped the church. The last faint rays of twilight scarcely penetrated through the stained glass windows. A lamp burned before the altar, and its beams, until then unnoticed, gradually took possession of all the space abandoned by the light of day. By this uncertain gleam, a human form could be perceived ascending the steps of the pulpit. As far as could be judged, it was that of a man of tall stature. His hair was white, and the lamp glancing on his face revealed its pallor.

Had the priest really fancied that he saw him whom his imagination had just conjured up? Perhaps in the first moment he would have been himself somewhat puzzled to explain what he felt. At the stifled exclamation which had escaped him, the shade had appeared to pause, with one foot upon the first step. Then the rustling of his robes and the sound of his step were again heard, so that by the time he had ascended into the pulpit, there was no doubt that if he were a phantom, it was a phantom of flesh and blood. But still it was strange. What was the object of this priest, (for he wore bands,) at this hour, and in the dark?

He sat down, coughed, and blew his nose, making, however, as little noise as possible. He was evidently under the dominion of that vague feeling, which seizes upon one in the presence of the dead, and which makes one speak softly, even in addressing a deaf man. This undefined feeling had been experienced by our two speakers themselves, and it was doubtless on this ac-

count that the mysterious priest had not heard them speaking. At length he rose.

"Ah!" said our two invisible hearers at the same moment, "a sermon, it seems."

The orator made a large sign of the cross. Then another, and another. And each time he slightly modified his gesture.

"What is he doing?" said the priest.

"Do you not perceive?" replied the unknown.

"No. Ah! yes,—I have it. I—I am afraid I understand it."

"Alas, yes. It is one of those very preachers of whom you have been speaking. He has come to rehearse his part."

The signs of the cross still continued.

"Miserable court monkey!" muttered the priest. "Will he ever come to an end? Why does he not rather go into the boudoir of a marquise? He would at least find a glass there in which to see himself. Ah! at last—"

The silent orator was at length satisfied with himself. His last sign of the cross was of unimpeachable elegance.

Then he repeated it, saying; "*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritûs sancti.* Amen."

His voice was that of a man thirty or thirty-five years of age, agreeable, but affected. Art had destroyed nature, and the speaker was evidently one of those who think it impossible too entirely to destroy it.

Then followed his text: "*Nihil aliud inter vos scire volui, nisi Christum, et Christum crucifixum.*" Then, according to custom, the translation: *For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*"

And all this in the tone in which he would have recited a madrigal of Chaulieu, or Bernis, or La Fare, or—but it would take too long to mention all the versifiers who were then call-

ed poets, and by whose verses the orator had undoubtedly been far more nourished than by the prose of St. Paul.

In the meantime, the priest and his companion began to distinguish his face more plainly. Whether their eyes had become more accustomed to the semi-obscurity, or their imaginations, calmer, allowed them to see better, he had now nothing ghastly about him. A rosy hue had succeeded the cadaverous paleness; his hair was still white, but with powder. The lugubrious cloak had turned into an elegant cassock, beneath which, a well-proportioned *embonpoint* was visible. This was then doubtless one of those "stout fellows," with ten thousand crowns of income, as La Bruyère says, in describing the court abbés.

"Sire," he said.

Another discovery. It was a sermon to be preached before the king.

"Sire," he repeated.

And after having tried every possible tone, he appeared at length to have found one which suited him. It was a skilful enough mingling of grace and power, of boldness and humility.

"Sire," he continued, "thus expressed himself a great apostle; he whom Providence selected to spread abroad the virtues and teachings of the legislator of Christians."

"There we have it," muttered the priest. "*Great apostle,—Providence,—the legislator of Christians.*"

"What would you have?" said the other. "The encyclopedia has had a hand in this. Religion *must* turn philosopher, if she wishes to be endured. Instead of *God,—Providence.* It is more vague, each one interprets it in the manner which best suits him. Instead of *Jesus Christ,*—the *Legislator* of Christians. In order, apparently, not too much to frighten those who would

make of him only a doctor, like any other teacher. And then *Apostle,—great Apostle,*—why how *could* they say plain Peter or Paul, John or James, and that too, before the court?"

"And to think," added the priest, "that it is thus throughout all France!"

The unknown smiled.

"The whole of France! I know one corner where I warrant you it never has been, and never will be thus."

"And this corner is—?"

"The—*Desert.*"

"You say the—"

But the orator was going on, and the priest, without awaiting a clearer answer, had again begun to listen. After a tolerably well-arranged delineation of the labor and suffering of the apostle, he said, "what then was the secret of his power? From whence did he draw so much perseverance and courage?"

But, instead of answering, with the apostle himself, "In his faith," which in 1760 would have betrayed his profession a mile off, the orator replied, "In his devotion to his master," and then followed a long tirade upon devotion in general, upon the power which it gives, and the courage which it inspires. This passage was, moreover, full of talent, and did not want life; it would have figured perfectly well as accessory, in a serious and Christian discourse. Unhappily, the accessory took its place as principal; the orator had evidently made up his mind to go no farther.

Was the learned abbé going at least to confine himself to all that was purest in the exclusively human devotedness to which he had reduced that of Paul?

It seemed, at one time, as if he were about to enter upon the religious view of the subject.

"And who," he commenced, "who is this master to whom

the apostle is proud of having given himself up entirely? 'I will know none other than Christ,' he says. What Christ? Christ glorified, without doubt—Christ forever seated on the right hand of God his Father,—no! Christ in His abasement—Christ in His humiliation—Christ condemned—Christ crucified—"

"Good, abbé, good!" But He had risen, only to fall farther.

It was not without risk that a man preached before the king in France; and where a Bossuet, a Bourdaloue, a Masillon, had so often and so sadly failed, it was hardly to be expected that an abbé of the court could, in 1760, refrain from burning some incense upon the altar of the same idol.

Accordingly, the humiliation of Christ was introduced, only in order to bring in a compliment to the king. Must there not be one, according to custom, at the close of the exordium?

"This," he then added, "is assuredly a sort of devotion with which your majesty will never inspire any one. Under whatever aspect your subjects contemplate you, they can perceive naught save glory and greatness—greatness of birth, greatness of undertakings, greatness in your virtues, greatness in all that comes from you! Ah! how easy is devotion to such a master! How little merit there is in serving you! But devotedness in misfortune—devotedness, in spite of humiliations and outrages—this it is which is difficult and truly beautiful; this it is which we will demand from God, through the intercession of Mary—"

"*Mary!* Good! *Mary!*" murmured the priest again. "Formerly, we said *the Virgin*, the *holy Virgin*. But now, bah! they would laugh at it. *Mary*,—it is in better taste. What do you think?"

"I object to it,—but *Mary*, or *the Virgin*, it does not make

much difference to me. As for myself, I should say neither the one nor the other."

"What would you say, then?" asked the priest.

He did not reply, but began once more to listen.

The priest began to think that there was something quite strange about his companion: he had wondered several times with whom he was speaking. Was he a stranger, as his travelling costume seemed to indicate? But the details which he had given respecting Bossuet's place of burial, seemed more likely to come from a citizen of Meaux. Was it one of the infidels of the day? He appeared, in fact, to have but little devotion to the Virgin; but he had spoken of Christianity and Christ, just as the priest would have wished all preachers to do. And that corner of France, in which he had affirmed that it was always spoken of in this manner? And that mysterious name, which his companion had not seized, but which had not resembled that of any province? The unknown, on his side, began to perceive the uncertainty into which his companion was thrown.

"Shall we go?" he said. "The exordium is finished; the sermon will be perhaps very long. You hear, moreover, that it is a constant repetition. Now he has taken up his *devotedness* in detail. Devotedness among the ancients—devotedness among the moderns—devotedness among savages—everything is there, excepting Christian devotedness."

"Let us go, with all my heart," said the priest. "I have heard only too much."

"We must try not to let him either see or hear us. We will take the lower aisle—this way—in the shadow. Ah! he stops! Can he have heard us?"

"He has lost his thread, I believe."

"So he has. Listen how he runs after his phrase. He has

lost one word. Impossible! Ah! it seems he must absolutely have this word—"

"He deserves that the same thing should happen to him before the king."

"This is the consequence of mechanically learning by heart: forget one word, and all is lost."

"But, Monsieur," said the priest, "one would suppose that you were of the profession—"

"I? Ah! he is coming down from the pulpit. Where is he going now?"

"To the lamp: he is looking into his manuscript. He has found his word, and is going back again. Let us pass while he turns away."

They reached the end of the aisle, but there was no getting out; the three doors were closed.

"We might have thought of that," said the priest. "Of course, he would take measures not to be interrupted. I remember now to have seen a beadle in the distance, showing out the women. What is to be done?"

"We must wait. He will, of course, open the doors, or have them opened for him."

"He is becoming animated. Let us go back. The end will probably be curious."

The end had not yet come. He was just then citing Orestes and Pylades. At length the peroration commenced. After listening some moments, the priest exclaimed:

"What impiety!"

But the orator, warming with his subject, did not hear.

"I would finish," he said, "by some instance, which would bring vividly before your eyes all that I have just laid before you. I would take this instance from a king, or those around him,—in this very place, if possible. But I have already said,

sire, that devotion is of no merit here, it is so easy, so sweet. If I were to name all those who are heart and soul yours, I should have but to name all those who hear me—all this court—all your subjects. Nevertheless, in the midst of these torrents of devotion which ascend towards you from every direction, may I not be permitted to point out one devotion, which, if not more entire, is at least more special, more constant, dearer to your heart? If devotedness in misfortune be a thing necessarily unknown, in relation to a prince surrounded with glory, and happy in the happiness which he bestows, yet royalty has nevertheless its cares, its vexations, its fatigues. Happy, then, happy the hand which is permitted to alleviate them! Happy the long friendship—"

It was here that the priest exclaimed, "What impiety!"

V.

ESCAPE FROM IMPRISONMENT.

There was, in fact, no room for a mistake. It was to the *friendship* of Madame de Pompadour that the orator dared to allude.

As long as this *liaison* had been manifestly an immoral one, the pulpit of Versailles had been contented to remain, as in the time of Louis XIV., silent and impassible; but since the king's mistress, now in her fortieth year, had taken it into her head to call herself his *friend*, the most scrupulous had gladly seized upon this aspect of the matter. It was well known that the marquise, in order to prolong the debasing influence which she no longer hoped to retain by her own fascinations, had finished by becoming caterer for the ignoble pleasures of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*. But appearances were saved; and what more

was necessary? What business had any one to ask what passed beneath the chaste name of friendship?

Our preacher of Meaux had accordingly only followed the example of many others, and, as is frequently enough the case, had gone farther than any of his predecessors.

It may be doubted, moreover, whether an arrangement of this sort was altogether to the liking of the favorite. "*Long friendship*," in particular, risked being ill received. Did it not force people to remember that the intimacy commenced some fifteen years back, and the friendship only three or four? Did it not bestow upon her, besides, that unwelcome certificate of forty years, which no woman is ever in haste to receive? But the abbé, in his zeal, did not look so closely into the matter. Who has tact enough *never* to be the bear in the fable?

He had just finished. A triumphant tirade had closed the peroration. "I am overwhelmed!" exclaimed the priest. "No! this abominable sermon shall never be preached."

"How—"

"It shall not be, I tell you. I would go, rather—yes, I would go to the king—"

"But what is all this? He is beginning again."

And, in fact, he re-commenced; but this time he spoke very rapidly, and without gestures, as if reciting it for the last time, in order to be quite certain of it.

"This time," said the priest, "I cannot bear it."

"It must be put an end to. Let us show ourselves."

"Come. But no—go, go alone—I could not contain myself."

"And if I restrain myself, believe me, it is not without difficulty."

He advanced; and as the orator paused in amazement, he said:

"Monsieur, there are persons here who have just heard your sermon—"

"Have heard my sermon!"

"And who desire to leave the church; not that they are not charmed."

The preacher bowed.

"Monsieur, you overwhelm me. May I know by what happy accident—"

"I really believe," said the priest, in a whisper, "that he thinks we are enchanted. Let him think so. I know where to find him again."

"We were at the further extremity of the church, and the door was then closed."

"It was by my orders. Pardon my having caused you this hour of imprisonment and fatigue."

This last word required a compliment. He stopped, as if he expected one; but his auditors were not the people to carry a pleasantry any further.

"You wish to go out?" he said, in a much less polite manner than before. "Knock at this little door behind you. A beadle is waiting outside to open it for me."

They went out: the beadle re-closed the door, and took his departure.

VI.

THE PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT.

In the meantime, the priest, occupied by these incidents, had forgotten the man in the porch.

After proceeding several steps, he remembered him; and although it appeared improbable that the beggar still awaited

him, he said to his companion, "Excuse me, I have business in this direction. I thank you much for your company."

"Adieu, Monsieur," said the other. "I shall remember this evening, and the tomb of Bossuet."

"And I shall not forget him who showed it to me. Shall we meet again?"

"I am on my way to Paris."

"And I also. Where shall you lodge?"

"At——but no; let us leave to God the care of bringing us together again, if He wills it."

"Be it so; I accept the *rendez-vous*. It will be perhaps more certain than those agreed upon beforehand. One word: are you a citizen of Meaux?"

"No."

"From Paris, then?"

"No."

"From what province, then?"

The unknown appeared to hesitate. "From none," he replied.

"You are not French?"

"I am,—and I am not."

"In God's name, I ask from whence you come?"

"From—the—Desert."

The priest at length understood. He involuntarily let go the hand of the unknown, but this he seemed to repent: he took it again, and pressed it, but without adding a word.

VII.

THE BEGGAR.

His beggar awaited him, still seated in the same place.

"At last," he said, rising; "your devotions are very lengthy."

And with the same air with which he had asked alms, he advanced towards the priest, when the latter perceived him suddenly turn pale, stagger, and at length fall upon his knees, his arms extended towards the middle of the street.

"Judas!" said a voice.

But the beggar, rising, precipitated himself in the direction of the church. His hands convulsively clasped above his head, he pressed himself, sobbing, against the doorway. He seemed desirous of hiding himself in the thickness of the wall, to escape some terrible vision.

The priest approached him.

"What ails thee? What is it? He is gone—"

"I do not wish to see him,—I do not wish—"

"I tell thee, he is gone."

"He is gone?" said the man, suspiciously. And when he had assured himself, he said, "So you knew me, when you told me to wait for you! He had seen me—had told you who I am!"

"*He*,—he! Of whom do you speak?"

"Of *him*—Rabaut."

"It is *Rabaut?* Rabaut of the Cevennes!"

"Yes, Rabaut of the Desert—Rabaut, the minister. You did not know him, then?"

"I had just left him, but I did not know his name. How he chanced to be behind me, I cannot now imagine."

Upon leaving the priest, Rabaut—for it was he, had, not without surprise, seen him direct his steps towards this door which he knew to be closed. A man who has a price set upon his head, has a right to be distrustful. He followed him.

"You did not know him!" cried the beggar. "And I have named him! and to a priest! good God! was I fated to betray him again?"

"Again?"

"Did you not hear what he said?"

"He said—'Judas!'"

"And *I*—I am that Judas!"

"Listen. On the word of a priest—"

The beggar shook his head.

"On the word of a man then,—will that content thee? On the word of a man, I swear that I will not betray him. But thou shalt relate to me thy history. Where dost thou live?"

"I?—nowhere."

"Where wouldst thou have passed the night?"

"There, upon the steps."

"Thou shalt come with me."

The beggar looked at him fixedly.

"I—with a priest? Since you have guessed so well, that I am not what I seemed to be,—have you not also guessed that I have a horror of them?"

"All?"

"All—save one."

"Come,—I will try to make thee say—'save *two*,'—come, come."

And the beggar allowed himself to be persuaded. They arrived at a little tavern, in a *faubourg* of Meaux.

"Has my horse been cared for?" asked the priest; "and where has my valise been placed?"

"Up in your chamber, Monsieur."

"Show me there, and bring me up supper."

The supper came, but the beggar refused to seat himself at the table. He took a piece of bread, and went to the other end of the room, where he ate it in silence.

"Still—'*save one?*'" asked the priest, with a smile.

"Still."

But this *still* was somewhat constrained. The heart of this man was evidently melting beneath the benevolent glance of the old priest. The latter contained himself as much as he could, in order that he might not seem to force a reconciliation which was now certain. He continued his repast. At length, after a somewhat protracted silence, he said :

" What is the name of this fortunate *one ?*"

" I shall never mention it, save to *the other ;*—if I find another."

" Then tell me."

" You wish it ? Well, since I have eaten your bread ; it is Father Bridaine."

The priest raised his head quickly,—" Ah !" he said, " Father Bridaine ?" Then continuing his meal, he said in a low voice, " and yet I have never seen this man."

The beggar thought he was speaking of Father Bridaine. " You have never seen him, you say ? Nor I either. But it seems to me that if I should see him—"

" Well ?"

" I should recognize him."

" Dost thou think so ?" said the priest, with the same smile. " Ah ! Well, I have finished my supper. Wilt thou confide in me,—yes or no ?"

" There is a price set on my head, I tell you beforehand, as on Paul Rabaut's. After that, keep my secret or not, as you choose. It is of little consequence to me. Listen."

VIII.

THE CEVENOL'S STORY.

And then the beggar commenced his history.

"I am one of those children of the desert,* of whom you have made pariahs if not worse, for pariahs have at least the right to exist, and this is denied us,—this right.† My father was born in the midst of the sabres of your *great* king's dragoons. My grandfather died upon the wheel; his father upon the walls of La Rochelle, and we have in our family Bible, by way of mark, an old piece of cloth stained with the blood of one of our ancestors, assassinated at Nimes on Saint Bartholomew's day. We spread this carefully, every evening, upon the page which we were going to read, and we said, with another martyr, in whose name we are persecuted, 'Father, forgive them!'

"I will pass over my earlier years. We grow old very soon, you see, when we grow up under the knife. I was seven or eight years old, when, in 1745, broke out the increased persecutions which gained us the laurels of Fontenoy. There was no childhood for me. Nursed in the midst of dangers and alarms, we were men at twelve,—at thirty, almost old men,—at forty, we had white hair, like *him*.

"I was not yet old, however,—I was twenty, but not one of

* It is known that this name generally designated the retired and wild spots where the Protestants of the south of France went to hold their religious services. Hence the common expressions; "*Churches of the Desert, Ministers of the Desert, Worship of the Desert.*"

† The Edicts of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. were based, as will be seen farther on, upon the supposition that there existed no Protestants in France.

our mountaineers surpassed me in courage, in gravity, in faith. If a message were to be carried at the risk of a thousand perils, I was ready. If consolation were needed, or encouragement, then also was I ready. The elders summoned me to their deliberations, and the ministers regarded me as one of the pillars of that poor but glorious church, all built of the bones of our martyrs.

"And I,—I loved this adventurous life. I, as well as others, might have attempted to fly from a country thirsting for our blood; no one could have feared less than I, those galleys to which the Protestants arrested in their flight were condemned. But to fly! Never once had I even dreamed of such a thing. And do not think it was only idle vanity. I said to those who fled; 'Go whither God summons you, He wills that I remain.' And I remained. In the midst of this oppressed province, I had made for myself a sort of independence which was even respected by the agents of tyranny. Twenty times I might have been captured in the exercise of my religion; twenty times was I allowed to escape.

"There were plenty of others who made up for this. Like Job seated in his habitation, and receiving in rapid succession, information of all the blows which could wound his very soul, I heard it said; 'Such an one is taken; he will be judged tomorrow, executed the day after.' And this one was perhaps a neighbor, or a friend of my childhood, with whom the day before, perhaps the same day, I had conversed and prayed. One day my young sister was seized and shut up in a convent, and not long after I learned that she had died of grief. Another day my brother was brought to me, wounded mortally. He had been surprised while returning from one of our assemblies. The soldier had fired at hazard, and the ball pierced his breast.

"Well, in the midst of this sea of troubles, I was calm.

Peaceably seated on the unshaken rock of my belief, I heard the waves of this bloody torrent roaring around me. What matters it, I thought, if it leaves me now, I shall arrive none the less surely, sooner or later, at that goal which the martyrs, and those who deserved to be martyrs, attain. Often, in some retired pass of our mountains, I took pleasure in erecting with stones, turf and wood, the antique altar of the patriarchs. I perfumed it with thyme, I ascended it, and then, upon my knees, with my hands raised to heaven, I offered myself up, body and soul, to that God, whose voice I recognized in all the sounds of nature, as well as in each throb of my heart. These mountains, at such times, were no longer the Cevennes,—I had overleapt time and space. In spirit I trod that land sanctified by the footsteps of Abraham, of the prophets, of the Son of God. O my mountains! O holy reveries beneath the chestnut trees of my home! In these times of desolation you were for me an Eden. And now—were I permitted to find myself once more in your solitudes,—they would be no longer heaven for me—but hell."

IX.

THE PARDONS OF THE CHURCH.

He ceased. His head fell upon his breast. His eyes were swollen with tears which he could not shed.

"Courage, my son," said the priest. "Take heart! Thou repentest. Of what, I know not as yet,—but thou repentest. It is enough. The church has pardons."

"The church!" he cried. "The church! The pardons of the church! Is it with flames that you would refresh the damned? It is this,—it is the church—it is her infamous pardons which have ruined me."

"Calm thyself."

"Her pardons! Ah,—I thought that I had found a man,—a Christian. And after all—it is but a priest."

He was already at the door. The priest retained him, saying, "My poor friend,—thou dost not believe in the pardons of the church. They have ruined thee, thou sayest. They have often been abused. None know it better than I. Come, thou believest in the pardon of God?"

"I believe in his punishments—for those who have made me fall into the abyss—"

"Pardon them, my son. Hast thou not told me that in thy home the murderers of thy brother were prayed for?"

"Ah! *they* killed only the body; these others—"

"Pardon them, I tell thee, and God will revive thy soul also."

"Ah! at last! The Christian has returned, the priest gone! Let him not return, I beg."

The priest sighed. Could he deny, that in this century as in others, there was but too often an abyss between the Christian and the priest?

"Sit down again," he said, "and continue."

X.

THE CEVENOL'S STORY.

"Such, then, was my life," resumed the Cevenol. "So many miseries suffered in common, could not fail to produce among us an entire conformity of feelings and ideas; and yet it seemed to me that few had attained that lofty point to which God had raised the impulses of my soul. It was not that I grew proud of this: on the contrary, I said to myself, trem

bling, 'Much has been given me, much will be required of me.' And it was only in rising ever higher, by contemplation and prayer, that I could strive to be grateful for the mercies by which I felt myself overwhelmed.

"But if the generality of souls appeared to me my inferiors, there were two, in whose presence I felt myself penetrated by a divine and superior warmth.

"One was his—Rabaut, the father of all of us; the pastor and patriarch, at thirty years, of these destitute colonies. He did not build altars of wood and stone, he did not bury himself in the mountains, unless he had to go to some distant cavern, to receive the last breath of some of our outlawed brethren; but the ideal of devotion, of which I went to dream in our solitudes, was realized by him in our villages, within a few paces of dragoons and executioners. God spake to me by the sounds of the desert; but God spake to others by *his* mouth.

"The other soul—ah! where is it? Has God recalled it to Himself? I know not: I am not worthy to know.

"It was a woman,—and I loved her. I loved her as only those can love who see each other in this world, but to hope for a meeting in the next. With her I tasted, beforehand, all the joys of this heavenly meeting; and if, sometimes, when persecution appeared to slacken, I dared to hope for the moment when the most sacred of earthly relations might be formed between us, it was she who taught me to keep my eyes turned towards heaven. Never had the contemplation of things divine raised me to such a height, that she had not preceded me upon the summits of faith—that her hand was not extended, to aid me in rising still higher. In the meantime, the report of our happiness had reached the ears of our tyrants. As I said, they neither wished to kill nor to take me, although I was daily within their reach. But if some spared

me out of respect, there were others who did so from policy. A prisoner, or dead, I should not be useful to them in any way, and my example would only serve to encourage my brethren. Living, but *converted*, who could better serve their projects than myself?

"But to accomplish this conversion, from which such an effect was anticipated, by any ordinary means, they felt to be impossible. They determined, accordingly, to aim a blow at my very heart. Madeleine suddenly disappeared. Her parents could not even ascertain in what convent she was imprisoned.

"The blow was a terrible one, yet I remained unshaken. I did not even suspect that they intended her liberty to be purchased by my apostasy. When, some two months afterwards, the subject was cautiously touched upon to me, it was easy to perceive, from my astonishment, that the idea had never entered my head, so impossible a thing did my conversion seem to me. I could not comprehend how any one could have the folly to hope for it.

"Yes, I was invincible, and I would have remained so, in spite of priests, soldiers, and tortures of mind and body; all these I could have defied; but alas! while life still beamed from my eyes, a subtle poison was already instilling itself into my very heart.

"While my enemies despaired of gaining anything from me, save my contempt for themselves and their faith, who, think you, had been their auxiliary? He who was filling all Europe with complaints against them,—the philosopher of Ferney,—Voltaire himself!

"Jesuits came to preach regularly in our villages. We were forced to be present at their instructions, and I had frequently the honor of receiving their severest animadversions.

As they found me immovable, the colonel of one of the regiments which occupied the country said to them; 'You understand nothing of the matter. Let me take this man in hand. Without violence, without threats, I will convert him in three months.' The proposal was accepted. What did they care for the means? These are always sufficiently sanctified by the end.

"The colonel pretended to take a liking to me. He spoke of our stedfastness in terms almost of respect. He said he thought it very absurd for the king to insist upon punishing it as a crime; but it was none the less a *folly*, he added. Did God care about being served in one way more than another? Were these doctrinal differences, for which we allowed ourselves to be murdered, so very important?

"I soon saw that I had to deal with an infidel. However, he was no more so than the greater number of the officers who were sent to preside over our sufferings. This will doubtless one day, be one of the most hideous characteristics of this age, that so many were found willing to act as persecutors, without believing in a God.

"It was accordingly by means of infidelity that he intended to try and lead me to what he called *his religion;* that is to say, his church, that shadowy something to which so many Romanists imagine they still belong, even though in reality, every tie which bound them to it be broken. The interest which he appeared to take in me alone prevented me from expressing to him at once my horror of infidelity; besides, I pitied still more than I condemned him. His infidelity appeared to me the natural consequence of a religion which taught so many absurd things, and I became, in consequence, only the more attached to that in which all that is believed is distinctly founded upon divine instruction.

"Very soon, he adopted the method of appearing full of respect for all that I regarded as essential in Christianity. He lent me books which did not directly oppose any of these doctrines, but which, passing them by, exalted morals at the expense of doctrine, and the virtues of man at the expense of the work of God. I grew accustomed, gradually, to set less importance upon faith. I began vaguely to say to myself, that after all, if such different doctrines could lead to the same moral results, it was wrong to be too much concerned, either in regard to what others, or what oneself believed. I had never seen this pretended morality, independent of doctrine, put into practice. I did not know what vices, what turpitudes it could shelter.

"Thus the cuirass was broken; or, rather, I had permitted it to be taken off. Then he lent me bolder, more able works, in which infidelity, disguised as simple doubt, treacherously attacked the very foundations of faith. A month before, I should not have read two pages of these; I should have rejected them with horror. *Now*, I read, I devoured them; and I began to understand, almost to excuse, this odious word, *folly*, which my seducer had used in speaking to me of our martyrs.

"At last he came to the point. No more books, but abusive pamphlets; no more discussions, but sarcasms. For the first time, the tombs of the old Camisards trembled, horror-stricken, with the echoes of that infernal laugh which had resounded from Ferney to Paris—from Paris to the remotest hamlets.

"Two persons, two only, could yet have saved me from this lamentable fall; *he* and *she*. But I had not seen him. So strict a watch had been kept, that he could not have taken a step in this part of the country without being captured. She—ah! I ought not to have needed to *see* her, in order to remain

under her blessed influence. I ought to have shuddered at the very thought of disturbing the harmony in which our souls had dwelt. I ought to have cried, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' But fanaticism and impiety had combined for my perdition. Whilst the colonel brought me his books, Father Charnay, director of the missions of Languedoc, brought me news of Madeleine; and this news, by a diabolical understanding, was always just what was necessary to confirm me in my impressions of the moment. When my old enthusiasm had begun to cool, they told me that Madeleine, broken by solitude, had begun to incline to a calmer piety. When I had been seen actually ready to make light of my belief, she had been represented to me as occupying herself only in good works. When I had learned to laugh at what I had adored, she was shown me—not as an infidel,—they would not have dared. I would not have believed it,—but indifferent, almost gay; ready, if I set her the example, to open the doors of her detested convent by apostatizing. They had often given her news of me too, they said. At first, she had been deeply grieved; then simply surprised, but rather glad than sorry for the change which was taking place in me. She saw in it an opening for proceedings which would permit us to be united. These proceedings, however, had never been openly proposed to me. They waited, with cunning patience, until I should meet them half way in that which they wished to impose upon me. At length the colonel spoke to me of it, but lightly, almost jestingly, as of a disagreeable step, which, with my new ideas, I could scarcely any longer refuse to take. I yielded—I signed—I was a Catholic."

XI.

THE LETTER.—FATHER BRIDAINE'S SERMON.—CONFESSION.

The Cevenol had proceeded thus far, when the host brought in a letter, sealed with a large seal. "A chair was below," he said, "and the porters awaited an answer."

The priest appeared much surprised: he read and re-read the address. "It is undoubtedly for me," he said. "Ah! the archbishops' seal! Who knew that I was here?"

He read it, and then said, "Tell them that I will come after a while.—I want the rest of thy story," he resumed, turning to the Cevenol. "I am far more interested than thou thinkest."

"The end is still a long way off. They are waiting for you."

"Let them wait. Keep the end for to-morrow, then; but come to Father Bridaine. Where, when, and how didst thou know him?"

"You know him also, then?"

"Yes—but go on."

"I was a Catholic, and Madeleine (at least so I was assured,) was about to become one. The news of my apostasy had been received in the country by a long wail of sorrow. My father had cursed me; my poor mother had nearly died of grief.

"It was necessary now to perform, at least for appearance sake, some of the public acts of my new religion; it was particularly desired that I should confess. Now, for this I had an inexpressible repugnance. Besides believing no more than I had before in absolution given by a man, however sincere and virtuous he might be, I had yet seen among the priests nothing but that which tended to render them odious to me. Even

while bowing my neck beneath their yoke, I could not lose the recollection of their cruelty and treachery, and I had not ceased to hate the authors of the persecutions, from whose influence I had withdrawn myself by apostasy.

"It was at this time that I heard Father Bridaine spoken of. They said he had never approved of the violence practised against us: he desired no other arms than gentleness, persuasion, charity. The evil spoken of him by our Jesuits, completed my conviction of the justice of these praises.* I resolved to make my confession to him. He was preaching at Nimes. I went to hear him—"

"Thou hast said," interrupted the priest, "that thou hadst never seen him."

"And it is true. I did not see him. The crowd concealed the pulpit from me, and I made no effort to approach. In default of conscience, a remnant of shame made me shun all eyes. If I did not consider myself as a traitor to God, I could not at least help looking upon myself as a coward in the eyes of men.

"I expected a controversial discourse. He preached none such, and I learned that he rarely did. Faith, the sources of faith, its enjoyments, these were on this occasion the principal points of his discourse. But what a difference between the faith of which he spoke, and that with which we had been tortured in our villages, to the sound of drum and musket! I had believed in all that he represented to us as constituting Christian faith, when I was a Protestant. And it was only in

* "The Jesuits of this place are a hard-headed set, who never speak to the Protestants save of fines and imprisonment in this world, and the devil and hell in the next. We have had infinite difficulty in preventing the good fathers from rebelling against our gentleness."—FENELON. Written from La Saintonge, in 1686.

ceasing to believe thus, that I had decided to abjure. Where, I said to myself, while listening to him, where, in the midst of these broad and magnificent ideas of the redemption of Christ, and salvation by his blood, where are the saints, the Virgin, purgatory, indulgences, and all that was preached to us as indispensable to believe, or indispensable to practise? He says nothing of them, and yet the system is complete. No vacuum, no place where these vain things which they tell us are essential, could reasonably figure even as accessories.

"I rejoiced; I triumphed. It was the Huguenot which returned! Alas! it was not the Christian. In vain I allowed myself to be delighted with such homage rendered to the doctrines of the reformation; I fell back upon myself the next moment, and considered with horror the vacuum which infidelity had created in my soul. Ah! if I have since endeavored to fill this vacuum, if God has permitted me to find again, beneath the severe pressure of remorse, at least a portion of my former piety,—it is to the impressions of this day, it is to Father Bridaine that I owe it.

"It had been announced that after the sermon he would confess all those who wished to employ his ministry. I waited long for my turn; it was night when I kneeled, after twenty others, before the grating of the confessional. From the embarrassed manner in which I recited the *Confiteor*, he understood with whom he had to deal. His questions put me at my ease; I finished by telling him nearly all my history. When I came to the means which had been employed to bring about my conversion, he made me repeat twice to him the shameful story. 'Poor lad,' he said in a low voice; 'poor lad!' At length he broke forth. 'The abominable wretches,' he said, 'to make him an infidel in order to make him a Catholic! To kill his soul in order to gain it!' And he seemed ready

to burst from the confessional. His voice had been heard. The people scattered about the church cast curious and terrified glances at me; they wondered, doubtless, who the horrible sinner could be, who excited in him such indignation. 'My poor friend,' he said at length, 'what can I do in this case for you? It is not by an absolution, in which you do and cannot believe, that I can restore peace to your conscience, and faith to your soul. Will you take my blessing? The blessing of an old man is said to do good. Receive it,—God will do the rest.'

"I left him,—I went away all in tears, and—"

XII.

A DISCOVERY.—THE ARREST.

"Enough now, enough,—" said the priest, who had appeared deeply moved by the conclusion of the narrative. "Thy memory is faithful,—yes, it is indeed that which Father Bridaine said to thee,—which he would say to thee, such as I know him. But they are waiting for me. I shall not return this evening, for I am going to lodge with—a friend,—I leave thee my chamber. To-morrow.—"

And soon the heavy tread of the porters was heard beneath the window, bearing him away.

Remaining alone, the beggar said;—"A chamber! a bed! It is a long time since I have lost the habit of using them,—and if it should be a trap? If—but no. His manner is so frank. Yes. And Father Charnay? And the Colonel? They appeared frank also—"

His eye fell accidentally upon the letter which the priest had received, and which he had left upon the table. He looked at

it with an absent air, then he took it, but mechanically. He did not appear to dream of its power to teach him the name of his protector. Besides, what difference did this name make to him?

At length he looked at the address. The letter fell from his hands.

This priest whom he had so rudely addressed at the door of the church, this priest to whom he had just related his history, this priest who had been so curious to hear him speak of Father Bridaine—

It was Father Bridaine.

"It was then himself!" murmured the Cevenol, astonished. "It was himself! In fact—yes—it is so—"

And one by one, returned to his mind, all the little details from which he might have been able to recognize him if he had had but the beginning of a suspicion.

"When I mentioned his name, with what an air he started. The second time, how he smiled. And what astonishment in his eyes at the first words of my history! How exactly it was that of a man who makes an unexpected discovery! When I repeated to him his own words, how he seemed to recognize them! And I—I did not recognize him! And yet in default of memory, my heart should have spoken. Ah! but why also that odious dress? At any rate, I have gained my wager. *Except one*, I said; and he pretended to bring me to say *except two*. I abide by the one."

"It is singular," he resumed, after a moment of silence. "I feel ill at ease here. I told him that a price was set on my head. He does not know why. He knows, perhaps. Let us see. What does this bishop write him. I am presumptuous,—but by what right should modesty be exacted from me? Let us see—"

He read:

"You, my reverend father, are not a man who can with impunity pass through a town without the risk of being recognized. You have been recognized, and I am glad that the news of it reached me; for I hope you will do me the honor to accept a lodging at my house. Others, bolder than I, go so far as to say, that we must not allow you to go away again without paying a ransom. They say, and I have a great desire to do the same, that you have never preached at Meaux, and that you could have no reason for refusing us what you have granted to so many other towns. All that I fear,—and your incognito confirms me in this idea,—is that you may have engagements which call you elsewhere. I confine myself for the moment, accordingly, to inviting you for this evening and to-night, assuring you, my reverend Father, of all my consideration.

"Louis, Bishop of Meaux.

"P. S.—At all events, I send my chair for you."

"This is very simple," thought the Cevenol, "and very harmless. He evidently did not expect this letter. Besides, would he have left it, if it had been connected with any conspiracy? I am easy. But what is that?"

A noise was heard on the staircase. The door was flung open with violence. Two soldiers precipitated themselves upon him.

He made not the slightest resistance. The treason of the priest, for he could not doubt it, crushed him, body and soul. At the moment of quitting the room, he turned his head again towards the interior, and with a bitter smile, murmured; "I can no longer say *except one*."

XIII.

THE BISHOP OF MEAUX.

Louis de Narniers, bishop of Meaux, belonged to the then numerous class of prelates who had never comprehended, nor appeared to comprehend, what a Christian pastor is.

His conduct, it is true, had not been openly scandalous. Public opinion no longer tolerated in ecclesiastics those bold turpitudes once so common, and of which more than one prelate had preserved, even so late as the reign of Louis XIV., the too ancient tradition.

Monsieur de Narniers had accordingly never transgressed beyond certain limits. He had had mistresses, like any other, but had not made it public; he had incurred debts, but he had paid them. The proximity of Versailles had enabled him to hang about the court, while still residing at Meaux. At Versailles as at Meaux, at Meaux as at Versailles, he had for a long time lived in a dashing style: then, brought back by age to less expensive tastes, he had easily gained a reputation for simplicity and wisdom. In short, he squandered an enormous amount in his youth; and in his old age, he heaped together in an equal degree. These two facts comprise his whole life.

At this time nearly eighty years of age, during the last twenty years all his affections had been concentrated upon two nephews—one a soldier, the other an abbé, according to the invariable custom of noble families. To raise one to the highest honors of the army, and to assure to the other, after him, the bishopric of Meaux, were the only and unchangeable objects of all his combinations and all his labors. He did not appear to suspect the least in the world that this was not his great business, or that he had been raised to the see of Bossuet

for any other purpose. He was, moreover, not ignorant of the weakness which his illustrious predecessor also had displayed towards a nephew, and was able, when necessary, to remind those of it who were astonished at his solicitude for his own.

And, nevertheless, with these exceptions, he was a man of a good deal of mind and tact. Few people, among the fortunate of the age, perceived more clearly than he did the universal decomposition of society, which was now drawing towards its crisis. It was asserted, that among his intimates, no one could criticise with better sense than he the abuses which were destroying France. Was there question of reforming a single one of these? The most crying evils had no better defender than him. He did not attempt to justify them; he confined himself to asking why the present generation should trouble itself more about them than any other. If they did not exist, he thought, it would be wrong to create them; since they did exist, it would be quite as wrong not to profit by them, if possible. It was the common mode of reasoning among those of the privileged classes who had not absolutely repelled the invasion of new ideas, and whose object was to belong to their age, although without breaking with the preceding ones. Thus, when the old Count of Canaples obtained a regiment for a young cousin of eighteen,* to the prejudice of many older officers, he declared his opinion to be, that nothing in his eyes, could be more contrary to good order and justice. But he hastens to add, that after having, as a citizen, spoken against an abuse, one is not bound, on that account, to renounce the advantages which it offers. The Duke de Saint-Simon, after so many austere discourses, contrived to have raised from three to twelve thousand livres his emoluments as governor of the castle of Blaye, in which he never set foot.

* Duclos.

Thus acted our bishop of Meaux. He was frightened, besides, and not without reason, at the thought of the endless overturnings which the least change might bring about. He felt that it was impossible to move one stone, without being led gradually, nay, perhaps suddenly, to demolish and re-build the whole edifice. In the meantime, he made himself as comfortable as possible in the old building. Like Louis XV., he said, "It will last as long as I do;" which meant, in his mind, "as long as I and my nephews;" for he would not have been able to endure the idea of a revolution ruining all that he had had so much trouble to build.

A great aristocrat in his notions, there was, nevertheless, no meanness to which he did not willingly and without effort submit himself, as soon as circumstances appeared to him to exact it. He considered it no more humiliating to bow before a favorite or a minister, than to stoop in going through too low a door. People had made for themselves, in this respect, a sort of fatalism—a sad excuse for all degradation. Whoever desired the end, must endure also the means. Did not Maria-Theresa, an empress, having need of Madame de Pompadour, call her *my cousin*, in 1756?* *Necessity* justified everything; and for our bishop there was no more imperative necessity than to establish the greatness of his house.

Thus far, he had had but to congratulate himself upon the success of his system. It was thus that he had obtained many rich benefices under the Regency, and that, after becoming bishop, he had succeeded in keeping them. It was through Madame de Pompadour that he had had a regiment given to his elder nephew; it was through her, also, that he had quite recently gained for the other the title of preacher to the king.

* At the period of the treaty of Versailles.

XIV.

THE YOUNG MARQUIS.

When Father Bridaine arrived at the bishop's residence, he was received with every honor. His talent and his zeal had gained him a reputation which raised him to a level with the bishops. It was well known, besides, that his wearing the mitre depended upon himself alone. Benedict XIV. had granted him the sole right of preaching where it seemed good to him, without having to ask permission of the diocesan.

He had for a long time exercised a sort of itenerant bishopric in France, of which all the bishops were glad to favor the exercise. The Jesuits alone, as has been seen, were jealous of his influence and success.

He had but little esteem for the bishop of Meaux. This was one of the reasons why he had not intended to make any stay in the city, and had meant to leave incognito. He responded however with much politeness to the prelate's officiousness; but as soon as they had exchanged a few words he perceived that his host had an extremely preoccupied air. He could not understand, after so pressing an invitation, the embarrassment which his arrival appeared to cause him.

"You will excuse me, my father," said the prelate at length; "but you perceive that I am very uneasy. My nephew was to be at home at nine o'clock: he had appointed this hour for several persons to come. It is ten, and he has not made his appearance. Well, no news?" he continued, addressing himself to a valet who entered.

"None, my lord: we have been everywhere. No one has seen Monsieur l'Abbé."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the bishop, clasping his hands. Then recalling the valet, he said, in a low tone:

"Have you been also to—to *her?*"

"Yes, my lord; he is not there."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the prelate again.

Bridaine had heard the *her;* and as the abbé passed for being very little of an abbé in his morals, he had concluded from it—what was unhappily but too true of many of the abbés of the time. At Meaux the thing was of public notoriety.

"Has not my lord also another nephew?" asked the missionary.

"Yes—the colonel. Ah! if I were obliged to trouble myself about his absences, I should not often close my eyes. When he comes home before midnight, I am half inclined to compliment him upon it. Ah, stay—here he is, I believe."

And, in fact, the jingling of spurs was heard in the antechamber, accompanied by the roar of coarse laughter, by which the young lords of the day announced their arrival, in their moments of *mauvais ton.*

"Parbleu, uncle!" he said, dashing into the saloon; "here is a pretty day's work, I think!"

But his uncle, a little confused, had hastened to meet him, and made him a sign to be silent. Then, taking him by the hand, and leading him to the missionary, he said:

"Monsieur Bridaine, Monsieur the Marquis de Narniers, my nephew."

Monsieur the marquis bowed, took off his hat, and threw it from him.

"Enchanted, Monsieur. But only fancy, uncle, that—"

"Have you seen your brother?"

"Ah! parbleu! But let me finish. Have I seen him! Most certainly I have seen him—most certainly—ha! ha!"

And still shouting with laughter, he threw himself back in the arm-chair into which he had thrown himself.

"You have seen him? Nothing had happened to him?"

"Now come, do I look like a man whose brother has broken his neck,—or who has just sold him to some merchant, like Joseph?"

The poor bishop began to be horribly ill at ease.

"Henry," he said,—"this tone—"

"Ah ha! scolding? The moment is well chosen. On my honor! Jacob getting angry when his Benjamin is brought back to him!"

"Henry,—once more,—you see that I am not alone."

"My lord," said Bridaine rising, "have the goodness to let me be shown the chamber which you have had the goodness to destine for me."

"Monsieur, Monsieur," cried the Marquis, "sit down again, I beg you. My uncle would say that it is I who have driven you away."

"He would say what is true, Monsieur," replied the missionary.

The other rose, crimson with anger. He seemed ready to rush upon the priest.

"Henry! Henry! are you mad?" cried the bishop, quite terrified. "Do you wish, wretched boy, to make me die of shame? I swear to you my father, that I have never seen him thus,—never."

And in fact, his nephew did not always go so far; but he rarely came home in the evening, without having the excitement of wine added more or less to his usual impetuosity.

"Come,—calm yourself," resumed the bishop, accustomed to yield, and sure, besides, that it was the only way of coming to an end. "Sit down, my father, sit down,—it is I who beg you. Come then, Henry, you were saying—"

"I was saying—upon my word, I have forgotten what I was saying. Ah!—yes—it is this. Fancy then, that I was quietly returning to supper with—you know—"

"Yes,—yes,—I know. Go on."

"What a family!" murmured the missionary.

"—— when, passing by your cathedral, I heard heavy blows struck on the inside, against one of the doors. 'Oh ho!' I said to myself. 'some devotee who has gone to sleep over his paternosters. He is caught; it is good for him.' I approached. 'Hey! my friend,' I cried, 'are you going to wake the dead. The door is not opened any more to-night.'

"'What, is it thou!' said a voice. 'Thou,—thou,—' I asked,—'who is it that calls me *thou?*' 'Why it is I.—I.' At the first moment I nearly dropped with surprise. You do not guess, my very dear uncle? It was Monsieur the abbé, your nephew, —your preacher to the king."

"My nephew in the cathedral. At ten o'clock at night!" cried the bishop, turning pale, for he knew the abbé too well not to fear that this adventure would serve to put him on the trace of some new scandal.

"Yes," continued the Colonel, "it was he. What he was doing there, I do not know; he would not tell me. One thing perfectly certain is, that if he did fall asleep in some corner, it was not while saying his prayers. And yet when he saw me laugh, as I asked him if he were alone, he swore to me, swore very seriously, that my charitable suppositions were false."

"He swore this to you?"

"Yes. You are going to tell me that that is no reason for believing him. True. But I saw from his manner, that he was telling the truth."

"God be praised!" said the prelate.

"Very good. But you do not ask me how I got him out. A little heroically, I tell you. I ran to the baker's on the corner, whose shop was luckily still open. I armed myself—"

"With a log?"

"Fie! that would be a pretty weapon for a gentleman! A log! An axe, uncle, an axe. And still, it took me I do not know how long, to break the lock of that cursed door."

"Holy Virgin! An axe! The door of my cathedral! 'Why there is enough there to bring on a terrible law-suit!"

"To be tried before you, luckily. And even if it should be before somebody else, well!—a great affair, truly! A brother rescuing his brother! Why that is fine, *very* fine; it is antique. And as to the broken door, an old habit, in faith. It was from the Camisards that I learned to use the axe. Are there then no indulgences, as in the good old time, for those who have warred against the heretics? Ah, ha! apropos of Camisards,—you were there too, Father Bridaine, in these cursed Cevennes. How was it that I did not remember that when I heard your name? We have served together, uncle, served together."

"Not the same master," said Bridaine.

"Yes, I understand. You God, and I the king. The fact is, that the king would do just as well to leave to God, and God's people, the care of this sort of affair, for it is an abominable bore to stay in those mountains. So, do you know what I once did to amuse myself there? I made a convert—Oh, a real convert. Not with the sword. No, a real convert, by reasoning, upon my honor;—and discussions, and books, books such as you have perhaps never read nor seen. Ask my uncle."

"Henry, not a word more of this abominable affair. I forbid it."

"Then you don't wish me to tell you my other adventure this evening?"

"There is another adventure?"

"Parbleu,—I should not have cried out, 'a good day's work!' for only one!"

"Let us hear it."

"You remember, do you not, this famous convert, my Cevenol, my assassin of Toulouse? Well, he is at Meaux; he is under lock and key."

"This man is taken?" said Bridaine eagerly.

"Taken; as taken as it is possible for any one to be."

"Henry," said the bishop, "if it is you who have had him taken, you were wrong, very wrong."

"Why? Cannot he be hung here as well as anywhere else?"

"You are determined he shall be hung? Come! Another taste which I did not know that you possessed."

"I? Not at all. The fact is, it did not even occur to me, that the thing might have consequences for him, so — disagreeable. I recognized him this afternoon, disguised as a beggar, and do you know where? At the door of the cathedral. I thought it comical that he should thus have come and put himself in the jaws of the wolf, and so I said a few words to the authorities. They watched him, and followed him, and at length caught him at an inn, where he had gone accompanied by a priest, no offence to you."

"And this priest?"

"Had just gone out. They will have him when he comes back, if he does come back; for he may be some vagabond also. And there is the whole story. I should have done better perhaps to have let them alone. Bah! what's done is done."

Bridaine had from the first, as may well be thought, recog-

nized the Colonel and his victim. At first, the bold marquis had inspired him with contempt only; but now, he shuddered at the sight of a man who had in cold blood delivered another to the hangman, because, he said, the thing had appeared to him comical. The spectacle of an implacable hatred would have been less afflicting than this atrocious heartlessness. But contempt for human life, was retained in a greater degree than most are aware of, in the descendants of the ancient braves. They began, like everybody, by talking sense and nonsense in regard to the dignity of man; but *man* in their eyes, was the nobleman. When a noble, (as happened several times in the course of this century,) amused himself, while hunting, by shooting down peasants, he only expressed in a more brutal manner than others, what many retained in their hearts.

"But where is my brother?" resumed the marquis. "Is he hiding himself? Let us go and see."

"Go," said the bishop.

XV.

REMONSTRANCES.

"My father," he resumed when his nephew had gone out, "I should have done quite as well, I believe, to leave you in peace at your inn, as to invite you here, to listen to the follies of my nephew. But what is to be done? Bad examples,—youth—"

"But he must have been young a long time, it seems to me."

"Yes,—in fact—he is thirty,—past,—"

Thirty-five, he should have said.

"Bad examples," he repeated, "camp life,—although, in

fact, he has only made one campaign—in Languedoc. But he is brave, my nephew. He is very brave."

The poor man seemed delighted to find at least one thing which he might praise in his most unworthy Benjamin.

"Brave, very brave."

"Alas! my lord," said Bridaine, "the world has never lacked brave men."

"Did I say that he was only brave?" interrupted the prelate, almost offended.

"He has but little respect for you—"

"Yes—he is not always precisely—what I would wish him to be."

"Little also for propriety—"

"Yes—just now—in your presence—oh! at court he is charming. Quite recently, Madame de Pompadour—"

"Little for religion—"

"I confess that he—but that has not hindered him from performing his duty, when it called him to fight for religion. Besides, you have seen him at work—"

"Yes, unhappily."

"What do you mean?"

"I have a meaning, my lord; and I ought perhaps to be astonished that a bishop should not understand me. But pardon me. You know my habit. I tell the truth to everybody."

"Go on, go on," said the bishop, with a somewhat forced smile; "you are but exercising your prerogative. You are authorized by the pope to preach when and where it seems proper to you."

"That is an irony, my lord, which would surprise me less in the mouth of your nephew than in yours."

"And an observation, my father, which I might, in my turn,

look upon as—but let us stop this. I am weak with my nephew; I know it very well. But he is neither better nor worse, after all, than all our noblemen of his age and condition."

"And it is this, precisely this, my lord, which makes me tremble for France and Europe."

"Are they, then, so inferior to their predecessors? The preachers in the time of Louis XIV. had no saints to deal with, it seems to me."

"No matter, my lord; our young men are inferior—we are inferior—all goes worse—"

"Come, now, dear father!—leave that to old dotards—to me, if you will, since I am almost eighty. Everything goes worse?"

"Everything,—but understand me. The machine in itself is not worse, perhaps; it is the same, in fact. But in Louis XIV.'s day, it was new: now, under Louis XV., it is old. Then, as now, society was but a debauchee; still, it was a young and handsome one. At present, it is still a debauchee; the same, if you choose, but decrepid, worn out, hideous. With Madame de la Valliere, it was twenty years of age; with Madame de Pompadour, it is forty. Yes, you are right—too right: your nephew, as you say, is no worse than others. But do you know where it is that I perceive the decline, the real decline? It is not in the greater or less degree of corruption in professed libertines; it is in the universal relaxation of all bonds; in the facility with which everybody takes part in it; it is,—allow me to say it—for I hope you will not do me the injustice to attribute my words to a petty jealousy of calling—it is, I say, in the heedlessness with which religion itself follows in the train of the tastes and ideas of the day. She does not preach immorality, perhaps; but she leaves open, nay, she opens herself, all the doors through which immorality

can enter. What is necessary, in the present day, for success in the pulpit? Pictures of virtue, base and lying apotheoses of man; declamations on honor, on humanity, on—devotedness, and what not! All that it is easy for people to admire, without considering themselves bound the least in the world to realize."

"But," said the bishop, "it is hardly this style in which you preach, I think; and you are none the less the preacher most run after in the whole kingdom."

"Yes, run after—as a curiosity—as a sort of *Danube peasant*, whom every one wishes to have heard at least once. It is a drop of strong wine, which everybody is glad to swallow, even at the cost of a grimace, in order, afterwards, to appreciate better the sweet wine to which they are accustomed.

"Ah ha! sweet wine!—sweet wine! That comparison is mine, I warn you. For the last week, if not longer, I have been enraging my nephew the abbé with it. Between us be it said, he has for the last three months been ruminating a sermon for the chapel at Versailles. He has so polished and re-polished every possible asperity of thought and style, that it glides along almost imperceptibly. And so, when he at last decided to read it to me, I said, 'Sweet wine!—sweet wine!' And do you know what he answered? 'So much the more reason it should froth.' He has wit and talent, that boy; and now that he is preacher to the king—"

"He may learn to preach, you would say?"

"But—"

"And yet it may be doubted whether his majesty would employ as his physician a man still in his apprenticeship."

"That is quite another thing."

"Most certainly. One is for the body; the other is only for the soul."

"You tilt roughly, my father. I should like to see you in the lists with my nephew. No—not in the lists—I express myself wrongly—I should like you to give him—some directions—some advice—"

"To which he would not listen."

XVI.

THE ABBE'S SERMON.

The abbé entered at this moment. It was indeed, as Bridaine had long since guessed, the orator of the cathedral. But Bridaine was utterly unconscious that he himself had been the innocent cause of the nephew's imprisonment, and the uncle's uneasiness. Upon seeing a priest leave the church,—it was already night, as may be remembered,—the beadle had taken him for the one he was expecting, and had quietly gone away.

"Come, nephew, come," said the bishop. "Here is the chief of the preachers in France, whom I have begged to be kind enough to give you some hints, and who asserts that you would not listen to him."

But without replying to this summons, the abbé had respectfully approached the missionary. His grace and excellent style were an agreeable contrast to the unmannerly churlishness of the marquis. Bridaine regretted to know how much these two young men, externally so unlike, resembled each other in other respects.

It was, however, with real feeling that the new preacher to the king expressed his surprise and joy to find him at his uncle's. The brilliant reputation of Father Bridaine, his style of talents, and his age particularly, permitted the abbé to compliment him without experiencing the slightest sensation

of jealousy. Thus he was surprised at the coldness with which his advances were received; but the well-known bluntness of the illustrious stranger appeared to him to explain this half-impoliteness.

After a few moments' conversation, the abbé said:

"We shall hear you preach at Meaux, father, shall we not?"

"It is impossible, Monsieur; I must be to-morrow at Paris."

"What!" said the bishop, "are we not even to keep you four-and-twenty hours?"

"No, my lord."

"May we dare to ask which of the churches of Paris is to have the happiness—"

"I am not going there to preach: I am not even to be seen there, at least for the first few days."

"Ah ha! if your incognito succeed as well as it has done here. But come; since there is no way of getting a sermon from you, would it be exacting too much to ask you to hear one? It is late—in truth—I dare not—but your experience, your advice. My nephew would be so happy—"

"Oh! uncle, Father Bridaine is so fatigued—"

"I? Not at all. You, perhaps, are tired?"

"I? How? What should make me so?"

He was exceedingly tired; for, before perceiving that he was shut up, he had repeated his sermon from one end to the other.

"Read, then, read," said his uncle.

He was forced to obey.

"*Nihil aliud inter vos scire volui*—"

"It was I who gave him that text," interrupted the prelate.

"*Inter vos scire volui, nisi Christum*—"

"I preached from it myself," he added, "some forty years since, before my lord regent. Monsieur Massillon complimented me—"

"*Nisi Christum, et Christum crucifixum.*"

"Good," said Bridaine, "good. I like these clear, distinct tests. And this is one which can only be interpreted and handled in one way." Although the abbé could in nowise, as yet, suspect a malicious meaning to this remark, he felt disappear in an instant, all hope of making the old missionary approve of the strange sense in which he had taken the apostle's declaration. His disappointment depicted itself so plainly on his countenance, that the bishop thought him intimidated, and yet this was not ordinarily his defect.

"Courage," said the uncle, "courage!"

So he began to read, but rapidly, and in a low voice. The bishop was in agonies. He thought the world of the discourse, although he did find it somewhat *sweet wine*; he loved it with the love of a father, or a grandfather, if you like better. He was distracted to see that the author, who usually read so well, was doing it so little justice. In vain he endeavored to make him understand how badly it went. Sometimes he repeated a word with emphasis; sometimes with all the vigor of his age-enfeebled arm, he accompanied, by a gesture, some movement which had scarcely been indicated by the reader's voice. But this voice became every moment feebler and more confused. The further the author advanced, the more plainly he saw the strangeness of his work. Not that he did not still consider it excellent; but it was more than he could do, thus to brave from beginning to end the disapprobation of a man who awed him in such a degree. Two or three times, he had ventured without stopping to raise his eyes, but had immediately lowered them again, confused, almost trembling beneath the immovable gaze which he found fixed upon him. Once again, he made the same effort. The features of his judge had assumed such an expression of discontent and pity, that he felt

his strength fail. At the first words of a page for which he had trembled n advance, he stopped, closed his manuscript, and placed it slowly upon the table.

XVII.

EMBARRASSMENT.—MORE REMONSTRANCES.

The bishop, for the last few moments, had at length appeared to comprehend the mute conversation going on between his nephew and the missionary. Exclamations and gestures had all at once ceased. Thus when the abbé stopped, his poor uncle was no less struck and motionless than himself.

Bridaine, on his side, was more moved than he appeared. Secretly flattered to have produced so soon, and with so little effort, such a striking effect, he was yet anxious to get away; the more complete the victory, the more useless was it to prolong the humiliation of the vanquished.

There was in the meantime a long silence.

"Monsieur," he said at length, "I see that you have felt while reading it, all that I could have said to you in regard to this discourse. Do you feel as a Christian and a priest,—or only as an author? I know not; you perhaps do not yourself know. But there is one thing that you shall know, although I had determined a quarter of an hour since, that you should ever remain ignorant of it. You shall know it, and may you see the hand of God in it! I know this sermon which you have just begun to read me. I have heard it this evening. It is not necessary that I should tell you where."

The abbé believed himself to be dreaming. The bishop looked at him with unspeakable amazement.

"Yes," returned the missionary. "I have heard this discourse.

I have listened unto the very end; the very end, Monsieur! even to the incredible things which you have dared to put at the close. And if I was able to refrain from interrupting you, if I did not cry 'sacrilege and profanation!'—it was because I promised myself,—because I swore to myself, to find you again, and whoever you might be to open my mind to you. You have read it yourself; there is no need that I should add anything. You have appeared touched; you are so, I hope. There remains nothing for me to do, save to await the consequences."

"The—consequences!" stammered the abbé. "I do not understand, my father."

"You do not understand, that when one has done evil and it can still be repaired, this should be done?"

"Evil,—I do not see—"

"Come,—I must be plain, it seems. The evil, Monsieur, is that such a sermon could only profane the pulpit. The reparation that I demand,—and which I expect,—is that this sermon should be destroyed,—that no Christian should ever be condemned to listen to it,—that it shall even be effaced from your memory."

"You dream of such a thing, my father? But it is on Sunday that I am to preach it."

"You will persist!" cried Bridaine, rising.

"You see that I am forced to it."

"Forced—to give such scandal!"

"But nobody will be scandalized. Nobody, I assure you—"

"The court will be there! It is impossible. The dauphin, at least—"

"The dauphin is not the king."

"The queen, whom you insult."

"The queen is accustomed to pardon a great many others."

At these words, Bridaine fell back on his seat. He, in his turn, was speechless. Such bold wickedness frightened him. The trial had been complete. He found in the character of the abbé all that he had seen most hideous in that of his brother.

"Help me, my lord!" he said at length. "Endeavor to prevent—"

It was no longer the same man. His voice was scarcely audible. He no longer demanded, he supplicated. And when, from the silence of the bishop, he had acquired the sad certainty, that there was nothing to be hoped from this quarter.—he no longer even grew indignant. His head fell upon his breast, his hands were clasped, and from his half-closed lips faintly issued the words, "Poor France! Poor Church! They wish to perish, my God! They will perish!"

XVIII.

TO PARIS.—THE TWO MISSIVES.

The next morning when the bishop sent to inquire after his guest, he was told that he left at day-break. He gave orders to send to the inn. It was found, that on his arrival there, he had at first been arrested as an accomplice of the beggar, but, that upon his explanations, he had been hastily set at liberty. He had left shortly after.

The bishop, and his nephew especially, were not particularly sorry. The Colonel wished to hasten after him, in order, he said, to teach him, that when a man has had the honor to lodge at a bishop's, he is a pitiful fellow to run off without taking leave. They appeased him, but without telling him what had taken place.

Bridaine accordingly, went on his way in peace. He had not been able to close his eyes. The scene of the preceding evening left a painful impression, still more painful after the night's meditations. He wept over society in ruins, over the clergy so little equal to their task; he saw wearing out, and falling to pieces, all the means by which a regeneration might still have been possible. The salt had lost its savor, as the Scriptures say; 'wherewith shall it be salted?'

It was accordingly with bitter thoughts that he travelled on towards Paris. The fresh morning air, the joyful awaking of the fields, could be of no avail against this austere and well-founded grief. And yet gradually, it ceased to occupy him exclusively. His mind had returned to remembrances of a different nature; the story of the Cevenol went and came in his imagination. Let us hasten to add, that upon learning the arrest of this man, he had resolved not to lose sight of him, persuaded, besides, that if there were anything to be done for him, it could be done better at Paris than at Meaux. As to the name of assassin, which he had heard applied to him, the tone of the marquis, and the observation of the bishop, convinced him that there was no real assassination in the case.

He even took a certain pleasure in completing, as he journeyed, this rude epic of which he knew as yet but the first portion. He felt, with emotion, that many, still more striking, might be found in this bloody struggle; he forgot the heretics and saw the martyrs only. What a contrast between their obscure heroism, and the indolent corruption of so many prelates, covered with gold! Between the faith of these mountains, and the infidelity of the cities which sent forth persecution and death! He too had been struck with the rigid austerity of the Cevennes. He had, while traversing them, understood what such a dwelling place might add to the religious

emotions of a race oppressed for its faith, and he had found in the mouth of the Cevenol, the expression of what he had there felt. Thus, although nothing less resembles the Cevennes, than the fertile fields of La Brie,—the solitary morning contributed to the revival of these old impressions.

But he was approaching Paris, and other thoughts began to present themselves to his mind. One, in particular, occupied him. He had received at Meaux, from a confidential person, informed of his journey, two notes, whose contents awakened a lively curiosity. One ran thus:

"You will stop first at my house, dear father. I consider it of infinite importance that you should not see a living soul before you have talked with me.

"Your very devoted CHRISTOPHER,
"*Archbishop of Paris.*"

The other, still shorter, contained the following words:

"You will have the goodness, my father, to see no one in Paris before me. "Your affectionate CHOISEUL."

Two such contradictory missives, could not but somewhat embarras him. Bridaine had from the first intended to present himself immediately to the archbishop; but how was he to affront the duke by paying no attention to a demand thus expressed? Not that he was inclined to tremble before the imperious minister; but if he were little disposed to yield to him from weakness, neither had he any reason for objecting to please him in what did not go against his conscience.

He had reached thus far in his reflections, when a carriage which had just passed him, stopped at the door of a little church. He saw a priest alight from it. This priest, to his great surprise, was the abbé de Narniers.

We will now let him go on towards Paris, while we see what events were connected with his journey.

XIX.

CONTRADICTIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES.

Good or bad, pure or impure, all the instincts and all the necessities of man were at this period united against order, or rather against established disorder.

Good and bad, pure and impure, all principles in this state of things were so blended, that it was impossible yet to know what should be maintained and what destroyed, at a later period.

For these reasons, both in the attack and in the defence, were to be perceived incoherences, contradictions, follies.

Liberty was demanded, and before it had been obtained, it was already rendered disreputable by every excess of license.

Virtue was preached in the morning; in the evening it was laughed at, and represented as laughable.

In speaking *to* the people, they are called the *nation;* in speaking *of* them, *the rabble.*

Fénélon is deified, but in making him out a free-thinker, almost an infidel.

The flatterers of Louis XIV. are execrated, but even those by whom this is done, prostrate themselves before Louis XV.

The Montespan, *the Maintenon* are talked of with great disdain, but sufficient incense cannot be found for Madame de Pompadour.

The people, who have as yet no rights,—imagine that they have them; the nobles who do possess rights, no longer dare appear to think so.

The parliaments take the position of representatives of the nation which has, as yet, no existence; they are put down by the royal authority which begins to exist no longer.

In everything, everywhere and under all forms, are scepticism, infidelity, discontent, fear or desire,—or rather, fear and desire both at the same time.

Driven about by so many contrary winds, tossed about between shoals but too well known, and those which could as yet be known by none, the crew of the old vessel were ready like the Pagan navigators of old, to ask who should be cast into the sea, in order to appease the fury of the gods.

There were three existing powers.

Philosophy, the outlet of all new ideas.

Royalty, the symbol and centre of all old ideas.

Lastly, the Church, detesting Philosophy and distrusting Royalty.

Whilst Royalty and the Church were ostensibly uniting their efforts against Philosophy, another union was secretly being effected; that of Philosophy and Royalty. The ideas of the day were establishing themselves, if not on the throne, at least around it. They were instilling themselves into all the channels through which royal action was spread abroad.

Philosophy believed herself doing honor to royalty. In some respects this was true. Accordingly, she wished her reward; but that which she most of all desired, the ruin of the Church, she dared not yet demand, and royalty, besides, would not have granted it.

A medium was accordingly sought. Was there not something to be found in the Church, belonging to her in a sufficient degree, to make its destruction agreeable to the philosophers, and yet not in a sufficient degree to make its sacrifice seem like the sacrifice of the Church herself?

This something was found to exist; it was the order of the Jesuits.

It is to be then, at their expense, that royal despotism, and

parliamentary privileges, are to purchase,—not peace, not even a truce, for Philosophy does not promise to arrest her progress,—but the favor of a little less bloody war. They are to be thrown to the wave which already wets the first steps of the throne. The wave will not recede, but it will remain perhaps a moment without advancing, and even if it should advance more rapidly afterwards, it will still be so much gained. Louis XV. has said: "This will last as long as I do."

XX.

TRUE POSITION OF THE JESUITS.

The society of the Jesuits only, among human institutions, has had the singular honor of numbering almost constantly among its adversaries, the majority of bad, and the majority of good men.

The majority of bad men, we say. As the advanced guard of the church, it received first, and courageously, all the blows aimed at religion, morals, and order.

The majority of good men we add, for by its pride, its despotism, its intrigues, and its relaxed or impure maxims, it has itself done immense injury to religion and to the church.

Good and bad, then, had equally strong reason not to be its friends. It must fall.

In 1760, after two centuries of tolerably brisk skirmishing, the two armies began to range themselves in battle order. The ranks opposed to the Jesuits, were seen to increase every day; theirs also, received additions,—if not of friends,—at least of those who felt that the enemy was not going to stop after having laid them prostrate.

They had always proclaimed themselves not only as the de-

fenders, but the representatives of religion; they said it was impossible to touch them without shaking religion. This assertion, long false, had now become true. For the past thirty years, the writings directed against them, were manifestly intended to reach further. It was religion and Christianity which were scourged over their shoulders.

Thence the protection accorded them by the bishops, who did not and could not like them; thence also the indecision of royalty in respect to them. They could with equal truth be pointed out as the supports and the enemies of royal authority; its supports, in virtue of the spirit of submission which they inculcated; its enemies, because their true sovereign was at Rome, and they were felt to be ready if the case required it, to make very light of any other authority than his or their own. They had never honestly recognized nor taught the gallican decrees of 1682. Such as Loyola had made them, they might be expected to appear, as soon as there was a possibility of their becoming themselves again.

XXI.

EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS FROM PORTUGAL.

A king, besides, had already put his hand to the work. The Jesuits had just been expelled from one of the most Catholic countries of Europe, Portugal.

Their expulsion, it is true, was in reality neither the work of the country nor the king. The country had no violent dislike for them; the king troubled himself about nothing.* Pombal, his minister, had accomplished all.

Pombal was one of those men who do nothing, not even

* Joseph I. ascended the throne in 1750.

good, except by sword thrusts. The ruin of the Jesuits, he determined, should distinguish his ministry, as the abasement of the nobles did that of Richelieu. He conceived the thing nobly; he executed it atrociously.

An exchange of territory had been agreed upon in 1750, between Spain and Portugal. Portugal gave up San-Sacramento, and in return received the seven *reductions* of Uruguay, conquered and civilized by the Jesuits.

What are we to think of this civilization, so much boasted of by themselves and their friends, so much criticised by all their detractors?

As in all their works, good and evil were there to be found most profoundly mingled.

The savages were Christians; but they only possessed a few Catholic forms, and a few imperfect rudiments of Christianity.

In law, they were free; in fact, slaves. Their bondage was gentle, but absolute.

They had been raised to the rank of men, but they were kept children.

They were happy, it is true, and that is at least something; but they were only so upon condition of remaining evermore isolated, evermore under tutelage.

However, the Jesuits had become attached to the soil which they had taught these people to cultivate. They knew, in some degree, what it was to have a country.

Great, then, was the anger of those of Uruguay, when they received orders from Pombal to quit the province. Cultivators were no longer required there. Nothing was dreamed of but the gold mines just discovered, and it was not desirable to be obliged to share their products with the Jesuits.

The colonists resisted. Pombal accused the Jesuits of having instigated them to this.

Was it really so? The Jesuits denied it. In any case, it would have been no great crime. The point at stake was the destruction of their work, and the brutal exile of more than twenty thousand colonists.

No matter; according to Pombal, they resisted the royal authority. Benedict XIV., at the solicitation of the minister, gave to the Cardinal Saldanha a mission of inquiry. This cardinal was the enemy of the Jesuits, the creature of the minister. He decided that the Jesuits violated the canons by employing themselves in commerce: accordingly, he forbade them preaching and confession throughout the whole kingdom. This took place in May, 1758.

In the beginning of September, the king received a ball in the arm, while returning, at night, from the house of the Marquis de Tavora. He was known to be the lover of the marquise. This shot, which had so nearly caused his destruction, was attributed to the outraged husband. No proof is to be found; but Pombal detests the Tavora family. A tribunal, over which he presides in person, condemns the whole family to death. Father, mother, sons, sons-in-law, servants, all perish on the same scaffold, the same day; some beheaded, others strangled, others broken on the wheel. Such were the proceedings of the man of whom the enemies of the Jesuits in France made a reformer, and almost a hero.*

His victims had had Jesuits for confessors. The day before the execution, the Jesuits, in a body, are declared to be their instigators and accomplices. Fifteen hundred are thrown into prison, and Pombal notifies the pope of his intention to expel them from the kingdom. They are shipped off by hundreds; they are cast, half naked, upon the shores of Civita-Vecchia.

* The decree was annulled in 1781, and the family Tavora solemnly reinstated.

And yet these last are they to whom the minister shows mercy: others, taken at hazard, will remain captives for an unlimited period. Like Louis XI., Pombal loved to have in his hand the lives of those whom he felt to be in his power.

Thus had commenced by calumny and violence this new period of a war which, in reality, had truth and justice on its side. The Jesuits had, in this case, neither assassinated the king, nor known the project of assassination; but they taught regicide. They had not rebelled against royal authority in Uruguay; but rebellion was written openly or covertly on every page of their books, in every word of their vows. They had not betrayed Portugal: but were they Portuguese? Has a Jesuit a native country? Thus could other accusations, equally true and grave, have been instituted against them; but for this wiser, and, above all, more Christian accusers, were needed. It is the fate of the Jesuits to commit great crimes, and yet to be unjustly punished.

But to this subject we will again call your attention.

XXII.

JESUITS IN FRANCE.

In France, the question had other bearings. It was felt, as we have said, that they were ready to become what Loyala had made them, upon the very first opportunity which was offered; but there was very little risk of this opportunity presenting itself. Royal power was still sufficiently strong, and, at least in this case, strongly enough supported, to have nothing to fear, for a long time to come, from the Jesuits or the pope. Although, in reality, there was an abyss between gallicanism and Rome, a compromise, observed for so long a time, might

last indefinitely. The Jesuits, besides, with their pliant minds and easy consciences, excelled in softening the intercourse between a gallican court and the ultra-montane popes.

It was not, then, as ultra-montanes that the Jesuits could seriously displease the royal government. Could they, in fact, do so any more on account of the other offences which were to be enumerated against them? Royalty had scarcely the right to pronounce their morals loose. As for their intrigues, but a word was needed, and all these would be at the service of royalty. They were quite disposed to use their power, so soon as they found it to their interest, as submissive subjects and zealous courtiers.

At this period, then, royal authority had no reason for declaring against them: it was, in reality, only urged to this by the ideas of the day, with which it was impossible any longer not to come to a settlement. Thus, before giving them up, it was desired to know what, throughout the country, would be the real tendency of the blow by which they were to be struck. The Duke de Choiseul was by no means a friend to them, but he was not the man to commit himself save on certain grounds. As to Louis XV., he let the thing go its way. No one in France understood better than himself that the downfall of the Jesuits was but the first step towards destruction of all kinds. But he dared not openly take their part; and he could not have supported them secretly, without wearing out and compromising the royal authority. He was therefore enchanted to be able to repose himself upon his minister; and the minister, on his side, asked nothing better than to rest his responsibility upon others.

XXIII.

SECRET PLANS.—DE BEAUMONT.

This was the reason for which Bridaine had been summoned to Paris. His relations with all classes of the clergy, and his long experience in the provinces, had caused him to be regarded as better fitted than any one else to give information as to the real state of opinion.

But the views of the minister did not stop here. He knew that the missionary had often had cause to complain of the Jesuits, that they were jealous of his success, alarmed at his influence; in short, that they did not like him. It might thus be hoped that Bridaine would take part, at least indirectly, in the projects formed against them. Although he was but a simple priest, the approbation of a man at once so pious and so popular was considered to be worth that of more than one bishop, and might, in case of necessity, be advantageously made use of.

He had, however, from the first, allowed it plainly to be seen that they must not count too much upon him. The enmity of the Jesuits had not so embittered him, that he was incapable of examining the question coolly. If he did not like them, he liked their adversaries still less. When he saw religion the object of attacks which became more violent every day, he could not bring himself to believe that this was the moment to disband a troop of whose arms and tactics he disapproved in general, but which, after all, was devoted, numerous, full of ardor, admirably-well disciplined, and which covered with its ranks the most perilous posts. It was not, therefore, to demand their ruin, much less to co-operate in it, but to say to both parties, if there were yet time, a few words

of wholesome truth, that he had decided upon this journey to Paris.

Among the men who at heart disliked the Jesuits, the most distinguished was Christopher de Beaumont, archbishop of Paris. During the fifteen years that he had occupied this see, he had not ceased to combat the encroachments of the infidels; but while, on the one hand, he sustained Christianity, shaken by them, he compromised it, on the other, by his rigors against the Jansenists, and his disputes with the parliament. It was not one of the least curious spectacles of this century, already so fertile in contradictions, that of the depositaries of the laws condemning him who put his hand to the execution of a law. The bull *Unigenitus* was, in fact, a law. It had been received in the kingdom with all the required formalities; it must be abrogated or observed. In persecuting, the archbishop was lawfully engaged; in tolerating, and in wishing to force him to tolerate, the parliament was manifestly neglectful of its duty. It was one of the misfortunes of the age, that it was impossible to wish for good, without doing evil; and that it was impossible to be on the side of reason and humanity, without encouraging revolt.

XXIV.

THE BULL UNIGENITUS.

Before going further, we shall give some details in regard to this famous quarrel. It was so connected with all the discussions of the day, that we must be pardoned for going back a little further, in order to describe its exact cause.

In 1713,—after forty or fifty years of disputes, during which it might have been asked what was the use of an infallible church, since she hesitated so long before coming to a de-

cision.—in 1713, we say, at length appeared this bull intended to make peace. From that time, every Catholic knew what he was to believe in regard to the point in dispute; the Jansenists, unless they openly proclaimed free examination, had only to bend their necks, and sign the act of adhesion.

Some submitted, many resisted, and at their head, the archbishop of Paris, Cardinal de Noailles.

What was to be done? The pope had his way marked out as plainly as was that of every priest, and every faithful adherent to the principles of the church. For the latter, obedience; for the pope, since obedience was not rendered, excommunication.

But if Rome excommunicated all those who, in reality deserve it, what would become of her, and what would remain to her? The pope preferred having recourse to royal authority; and in these struggles, Louis XIV. consumed the last efforts of his despotism, and the last months of his life.

The Regent, who desired peace above everything, took care not to continue this; accordingly, more than one refractory individual, whom persecution would probably have maintained in his principles, gradually came to agree with the bull, and died submitting to it. The archbishop was among the number. This was in 1729.

His successor, Monsieur de Vintimille, went several steps further. Although not agreeing with the doctrines of the bull, he felt the necessity of supporting it, whatever it was, as a law of the Church and a manifestation of unity. But Monsieur de Vintimille arrived in Paris, at the age of seventy-four, and felt no more disposition to persecute others than to be persecuted himself.

Younger, bolder, more consistent, Monsieur de Beaumont was going to do what every sincerely believing bishop would do if he dared. He forbade the admission to the sacraments

of any one who should be found without the pale of Roman unity, and who should refuse to enter it by accepting the bull.

Tyranny, certainly; but had a Catholic the right to complain of it? There is the true, the only question.

Evidently not, unless indeed he attributed to himself also, as a general thesis, the right of determining what laws he would choose to obey, and what disobey. On the contrary, for the bishop to refuse the sacraments of the Church to those who should put themselves without the pale of the Church, is not only his right, but his duty. You have, as a man and a Christian, the right of quitting the Romish Church; you have not the right, so long as you remain in the bosom of that Church, to be a Catholic otherwise than as she directs.

But among those to whom he applied these irreproachable principles, de Beaumont had the misfortune generally to encounter people of noted piety, of exemplary conduct, of a position which caused all to exclaim against him, parents, friends, companions, great and small, believers and unbelievers. He or she to whom the last sacrament had been refused, was a poor nun who had been looked upon as a saint by her whole convent; or a learned canon of Saint-Geneviève who had passed his whole life in studying religion; or the old councillor who was always seen at mass, the protector of orphans, the providence of the quarter! Can their salvation be doubtful for that? Scarcely; and yet, if it be believed in, would it not be equivalent to believing that the sacraments are not indispensable, that there is salvation as well without as within the Church? This heretical thought is alarming; people try to get rid of it; they cannot.

Touched in its members, in its friends, the parliament believed itself summoned to their defence. Was the matter within its authority? In law, it had no more right to inter-

fere, as a court of justice, than its members had, as Catholics, to blame the severity of the archbishop. The bull, as we have said, was a law of the State. Guardian of the laws, the parliament, if it took any part in this affair, could in reason, only support the archbishop, and blame all tolerant priests. Far from that. In 1750 a number of curés were summoned to the tribunal and condemned to fine and imprisonment.

Two years afterwards, the archbishop himself was taken in hand. His revenues were seized; the peers were convoked to try him, but the king forbade them to answer to the appeal.

Now, this was at the time of the negotiations of Aix-la Chapelle. The tendency of these quarrels was exaggerated, out of the country, and advantage was taken of them to treat France as a State enfeebled and exhausted by intestine struggles. The government, and the king particularly, would have preferred continuing the matter, but it was important, at any time, to show foreigners that he was master at home.

Accordingly, a decree of the king's council, broke and annulled those of the Parliament. The bull was again proclaimed a State law. The jurisdiction of bishops in all matters pertaining to the sacraments, was declared intact and sovereign.

Thereupon, innumerable remonstrances, in which the humility of the style only served to make the boldness of the matter more remarkable. The parliament submitted, but with that affected resignation which serves far better than an outcry, to call down upon despotism the attention and indignation of the people.

Then came a new edict, forbidding the parliament to meddle in these affairs. New remonstrances. Threats of suspending the course of justice.

This threat was soon put into execution. Justice was suspended, the Palace of justice abandoned. The parliament assembled once more, however, in order to pronounce in spite of the king's prohibition, a solemn decree, interdicting the refusal of the sacraments.

This decree was the overthrow of the monarchy. It was necessary either to punish it or to abdicate. The parliament was accordingly dissolved; its members were dispersed in exile all over France, and some of the boldest, especially the Abbé de Chauvelin, were imprisoned in the different fortresses.

The government hoped then to succeed in inducing the archbishop to be more moderate. Monsieur de Beaumont resisted, and a *letter de cachet* sent him to Conflans.

In the meantime, the Abbé de Bernis was at Rome, negotiating for a new interpretation of the bull. Benedict XIV., the most tolerant of popes, was willing to do all he could, but what could he yield? He resolved to drown in a long encyclical letter, all that which was most offensive in the work of Innocent XI. A wide door was opened to all who wished to have pardon. It was still required that the bull should be accepted, but people were allowed to a certain point, the permission to determine in their own minds, in what sense they would accept it. The toleration and enlightenment of the pope, concluded, in fact, by legalizing that which morals, even mere human morals, have always looked upon as unworthy of an honest man; a mental reservation.

But *appearances* were saved. The parliament was recalled, at first in part, then entirely. Humble but conquering, it reentered that Paris of which it was the idol; and the king, who was in need of funds, endured the public rejoicings with tolerable fortitude. They sang, and then they paid.

In the meantime, the honorable men on either side, wanted

none of the pope's explanations. The archbishop and the most pious of the Jansenists had remained upon the original grounds of the dispute. The former continued to punish, the others to resist.

XXV.

THE PLACE DE GRÊVE.—THE PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT.

When Bridaine finally entered Paris, his hesitation was at an end. He would go first to the archbishop.

The night had set in, for he had stopped in a village on purpose not to arrive in the day-time. As he crossed the place which, it is said, might be paved, and more than paved with the heads which it has seen fall,—the Grêve,—he felt his hand suddenly sprinkled with a cold and sticky substance. It was blood. His horse's foot had slipped in a pool, and as far the twilight permitted him to judge, this pool was crimson.

Whose blood was this? Through what tortures had the unhappy wretch there killed, passed, before expiring?—for at this epoch, justice was rarely satisfied with killing her victim. A body whose head alone was missing, would have appeared to her an unworthy prey. The condemned must *feel* himself dying; if he implored for a prompt death, she answered him, as did Caligula of old; "I am not yet reconciled with thee." The last stroke was a favor, a *coup-de-grâce*, (mercy stroke,) for this was the origin of this expression, figurative and enfeebled at the present time, but then atrociously true.

Whose, then, was this blood? Bridaine paused; his eye questioned the pavement.

A few steps off, he perceived a man who appeared animated by the same thoughts. He had his eyes fixed upon the ground, and had not turned at the sound of the horse's step.

"Monsieur," he said to him, "who has been—"

He did not know with what verb to complete his phrase. Blood then flowed in so many different ways, that it was impossible to know what word to employ.

"An assassin," replied the man, "from what I hear."

At the sound of this voice, Bridaine approached him quickly. "It is you!" he exclaimed.

He had recognized Rabaut.

"It is you!" said the latter. Then he added, with a smile, "You see that we meet again."

"I left an unknown; I now meet—"

"Ah! I understand. My Judas must have told you who I am."

"It was he. But call him no longer Judas."

"He repents?"

"Did you not perceive it?"

"May God forgive him."

"And you?"

"I? I have done so."

"Good. But what was his crime?"

"He did not tell you?"

"No."

"It would be a long story, and this is scarcely the place."

"Yes; in fact, this place—Will you allow me one question?"

"Say on."

"What were you doing here, in this blood?"

"I was familiarizing myself with the spot."

"I do not understand—"

"You do not understand that when a man is named Rabaut, he may have—some interest—in what passes here?"

"But it is now many years—"

"Many years, it is true, since any of us have been taken.

But to which of those who have been taken has mercy ever been shown?"

Bridaine sighed deeply, and went on his way.

"Go!" murmured the outlaw, "go!—go and hide the crimson which must flush thy brow, at thought of the cruelties of thy Church!—go and stifle thy sighs of pity!—go, get thee thy priest's heart again! Oh! the Church!—the Church! The lamb which has become a tiger!—the martyr which has become executioner! The white robe of old, which for a thousand years has been steeped in blood! Oh God! Thou who didst repent Thee of having made man! dost Thou not repent Thee of having made the Church! Where are the waters which shall sweep it from the face of the earth? Where is the abyss deep enough to swallow up all its iniquities? This blood burns my feet! Good God! is mine also one day to flow? The scaffold,—the executioners! Ah!"

He shuddered violently; he bent beneath the burden conjured up by his own imagination; his feet seemed rooted in this bloody earth, whose mysteries he had thus evoked.

At length he was able to walk. He went away with horror, and yet with regret, as if he feared to lose a part of the hideous lesson which he had come there to seek. Suddenly, at the angle of the quay, he seemed to find himself in the presence of all the terrors he had just left behind. He turned again towards the place. His gaze was directed towards the centre, opposite the Hôtel de Ville; he seemed to behold in thought, one of those frightful dramas of which this spot was habitually

XXVI.

TENDER MERCIES OF THE PARLIAMENT.

It was because, three years before, on the fifteenth of April, 1757, he had stood upon this same corner. An innumerable throng, crowded and breathless, covered the place, and every approach to it. Even on the roofs, there was a crowd; at the windows, the whole court; young lords, young ladies, in the most dazzling attire. Much was talked of the enormous sums paid for good places, and for bad ones also. Entirely satiated with all ordinary pleasures, these people wished to try a new one: they came to see a man killed with all the refinements of the age's justice.

This man had committed a great crime: he deserved death. But as his crime was one of those whose responsibility belonged, in a great measure, to the century which witnessed their accomplishment, the century wished to wash itself clean in the blood of the criminal. Damiens, the assassin of Louis XV., was to suffer, in *his* person alone, all that the whole of those who had armed his hand ought to have suffered, all together.

Now, these were both those who attacked existing abuses, and those who maintained them; for the first attacked with bitterness, undermining everything; and the others resisted with tenacity, upholding everything. They were those who popularized infidelity by their books, and those who popularized these books by burning them; they were those who repeated after Voltaire, "*Let us crush the wretch*," and those who supported, in the name of religion, all the old infamies of the Church. It was the parliament, which set itself up, without the right to do so, as controller of the court; and this court, which aspired to exercise, without control, the most monstrous privi-

leges. It was Louis XV. himself, representative and personification of all the anomalies, all the irregularities of his epoch.

This the assassin might have replied to Monsieur de Machault, the comptroller-general, who ordered him to name his accomplices, and who tore his limbs with red-hot pincers; this he might have repeated, during the tortures to which he submitted many times during his trial. They had gravely and learnedly discussed what sort of torture could be pushed furthest without killing the patient. There had been consultations between physicians, executioners and judges. The horrible areopagus had decided upon the *boot*. Damiens had had his limbs nearly ground to pieces. They had only ceased the torture upon seeing him ready to expire; then they had carefully revived the faint breath of life remaining; and he was a healthy, almost a robust man, when Rabaut had seen him appear upon the scaffold.

They placed him upon a kind of seat, of which the legs were strongly secured to the frame-work of the scaffold. The executioners were occupied for ten minutes in binding him with cords and iron, so that any movement was impossible. His right arm remained free: this arm, in turn, was tied fast upon a horizontal prolongation of the back of the seat, but the hand went beyond the wood. Then a chafing-dish was set beneath this hand: it was not filled with coals, but sulphur. A horrible cry—one of those cries which come from the very seat of life, and seem to carry life away with them—issued from the patient's lips. The crowd undulated like the sea; the beautiful ladies at the windows threw themselves back; then gradually they were seen to re-appear, pale, breathless, their vinaigrettes to their nostrils, their *lorgnons* to their eyes. It was a frightful spectacle, this hand consuming without any fire being perceived, for the sun extinguished the flame of the sulphur.

A blackish smoke, a nameless odor, began to fill the whole place. Damiens no longer cried out; he looked sometimes at his hand, sometimes at the infernal laboratory which was flaming at the other end of the scaffold.

There were heating, not Monsieur de Machault's pincers, but the good old pincers of the provostship of Paris; unless, indeed, new ones had been made, in order that they might take hold better. There were boiling, in five caldrons, oil, resin, wax, sulphur and lead. There stood five or six tormentors, ready each, at a signal from his chief, to bring his horrible potion.

When the hand was no longer anything but a mass of nearly lifeless flesh, they took away the brasier of sulphur, and brought that in which were heated the pincers.

But we will shorten this scene: our hearts would fail us before the end. Soon the breast, the arms, the legs, were but one horrible wound: then upon these deep sores were seen to flow resin, wax, oil, sulphur, metal. It was thus that the gentlemen of the parliament wrote, after their fashion, upon a living book, the assurance of their devotion to the king. They purchased, at the expense of this unhappy wretch, the reinstatement of the still exiled chambers. By inflicting upon Damiens the tortures of Ravaillac, did they not assure Louis XV. that he was worth quite as much as Henry IV.?

All was not yet over. Damiens still breathed, saw, and howled, and at intervals, he came to himself and spoke. Four horses were there. They could scarcely be held in. More humane than man, they had not ceased struggling to fly from this gloomy spot, from these howlings, and this poisonous atmosphere. It is now their turn to take the place of the executioners, and to tear in four parts that body upon which there is no place left for fresh tortures. They pull, pull—and pull again.

In vain. They have pulled for a quarter of an hour, and Damiens is still whole, and from time to time he raises his head and watches their efforts. "Ah! the poor horses!" exclaimed, it is said, a young and pretty woman, Madame Priandeau, niece of the famous financier Bouret.

In the meantime, night was approaching. The parliamentary commissioners, charged with the direction of the tortures, did not know how to put an end to the thing. A puzzling matter, indeed! The decree must be executed to the letter, and the decree says *quartered*. The crowd murmurs, grows impatient, indignant. "Give him the *coup de grâce*," they cry, "the *coup de grâce*!" At length the gentlemen decide; but the decree must be followed, so they cut the tendons of the arms and legs, and after that the horses soon do the rest.

It was this that Paul Rabaut, the man of the desert, had seen at Paris, in the year of grace 1757. And it was the recollection of this which carried him back there, as he stood in the same place July, 1760.

XXVII.

THE PROTESTANTS.

And for what did he come to Paris?

On his first visit he had seen the prince de Conti; on this last, he had come to see men already more powerful than princes, namely, those of the encyclopedical and liberal party.

Some details, of which we shall have need in another portion of this narrative, may be given here.

In spite of the stirring up of the clergy, the authorities began, in some provinces at least, to weary of prosecuting the Protestants. Besides the odium of this duty,—the inefficacy

of the severities had become evident. The number of Protestants was but little diminished; that of their pastors, reduced under Louis XIV. to three or four, had risen again to sixty, although, as Rabaut said, none of those who had been taken, had failed to pay for their devotion with their lives.*

In these scruples had originated, in 1755, the famous consultation of Rippert de Monclar, attorney-general of the parliament of Aix.

Rippert was one of those parliamentary writers, who think that they may attack the clergy and their pretensions, without shaking Catholicism itself. An honorable error, into which it is a happy thing that many should have fallen, but of which it is difficult to conceive how men of sense should not yet have become sensible.

He began by asserting, particularly in opposition to the fiery Monsieur de Montclus, bishop of Alais, that toleration is possible in a religious, and wise in a political point of view. "Civil toleration," he says, "is at the present day the feeling of not only all the solid and Christian minds in Europe, but

* The following is a list of the pastors executed in France from 1686 until 1760:

1686. *Roy*, at Beaucaire. 1687. *Dalgue*, at Nimes. 1689. *Bertezène*, at Saint-Hippolite; *Poisson and Dombres*, at Nimes. 1690. *Olivier*, *Quet and Bonnemere*, at Montpellier. 1691. *Roussel*, at Montpellier. 1692. *Etienne and Paul Plans*, at Montpellier. 1693. *Cologna*, at Marsillargnes. 1695. *Papus*, at Montpellier. 1696. *Laporte and Guérin*, at Montpellier. 1697. *Plans*, at Montpellier. 1698. *Brousson*, at Montpellier. 1718. *Arnaud*, at Alais. 1728. *Roussel*, at Montpellier. 1732. *Durand*, at Montpellier. 1745. *Rane*, at Die;—*Roger*, at Grenoble. 1746. *Desubas*, at Montpellier. 1752. *Benezet*, at Montpellier. 1754. *Lafage*, at Montpellier. Total; twenty-five. But this list includes only the regular pastors,—exclusive of the numerous *preachers* tortured during the beginning of the eighteenth century.

of all the rational men in the universe." A somewhat less preremptory style would be preferable. But it was the taste of the period. No one was able to put forth a somewhat liberal idea, without asserting that the whole universe was on his side.

The author demonstrates in the second place, that the conversion of the Protestants is a thing to be despaired of; then, after a long theological discussion, in which he makes tolerably light of the prescriptions of the council of Trent, he concludes, that the king is free to establish, if he chooses, an exclusively civil form for the marriages of Protestants, the register of their births and deaths, etc.

Finally, touching upon the more elevated side of the question, he expresses his amazement that the bishops are not the first to be scandalized at the sacrilege which terror extorts from the Protestants. "What idea," he says, "do we give them of our respect for our sacraments, when we force them to participate therein without belief, while we teach elsewhere, that those who do not believe in them profane them?* It is the duty of the bishop to demand from the king the abolition of the edicts of Louis XIV., declaring that they cannot lend themselves to the fiction, according to which there are none but Catholics in France. If they will not do this from humanity, let them at least do it for conscience sake, and from respect for themselves."

Their conscience, in this respect had been for too long a time hardened; and in their eyes what had humanity to do in the matter? Had not Bossuet said,† that "those who do not

* It may be remarked, that the system of external Catholicism, with tacit permission to remain Protestant, was precisely that of the parliamentary Jansenists, those who refused to sign a formula in which they did not fully believe.

† *Scripture Politics*, VII. 10.

wish that the prince should use severity in religious matters, are *in an impious error?*" And this was repeated by the bishop of Alais, and with him repeated it all the episcopacy of the kingdom. "If," answered the attorney-general, "an exact list were laid before Monsieur de Montclus, of all the Protestant ministers who have been put to death, of all the persons of every age and rank who have been sent to the galleys, of all the taxes, fines and confiscations which have been exacted, of all the children who have been taken away from their parents, of all the marriages which have been annulled, of all the property which has in consequence been adjudged to collaterals, of all the persons who have been imprisoned and kept in a long and severe captivity, of all the decrees which have been carried out against an infinite number of others, of all the excesses and all the frightful murders committed on them by the king's troops, and *against his majesty's intentions*,* this list alas! would extend to volumes. All France resounds with the cries of these unfortunates. They attract the compassion of all those who glory in being, I will not say Christians, but men; and a bishop is insensible to all this. A bishop seeks to redouble this suffering! Would it not become him better, after having planted and watered in their favor, to groan for them, as saith the Scripture, between the porch and the altar, and so endeavor himself to calm the wrath of the prince?"

* Words evidently added to excuse the preceding ones. Louis XIV. and Louis XV. may have been ignorant of many of the details, but they could not have been unacquainted with the general plan upon which the persecution was conducted

XXVIII.

THE MEMORIAL.

This memorial had come before the eyes, not of the king, for, in all probability, he never heard of it, but of the Prince de Conti. An old officer, Monsieur de Beaumont, and an agent of the churches of the desert, Monsieur Lecointe, had gained access to him.

The Prince de Conti had, at the court of Louis XV., occupied the position of a brave soldier, an independent thinker, and an infidel also, for in those days the two things were much alike. His laurels of Coni had given him the right to speak in military style to the favorite of his master; but of all forms of frankness, the licentious epigram was often that which he preferred. After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, he had taken it upon himself to talk of economies, and the advice no less than the adviser had given offence. Disgraced, he had consoled himself in becoming, as before him the Dutchess du Maine, the patron and centre of grumblers. It was at Isle-Adam, his favorite chateau, that arrows were sharpened against Versailles; but Versailles, with the king at its head, made occasionally pretty good rejoinders. "What is my cousin the *advocate* about?" asked Louis XV. one morning, at his levee; and this word must have been met with and examined in the recollections of the period, in order to understand all that it could be made to contain of royal irony, of aristocratic and cutting disdain.

The advocate of Isle-Adam seemed, accordingly, quite disposed to become the advocate of the persecuted Protestants. What was his idea in reality? "Was it," we ask with a his-

torian, "was it the blood of the old Condés which led their descendant to inquire after the churches of the desert? Is it to be supposed that his idleness as prince of the blood disposed him to take part in an affair where he encroached upon the functions of the king? Is the credit to be given to the philosophy of the age, to a tendency towards cabal, or to a noble ambition? One is inclined to hesitate between these suppositions, or to unite them all."*

However this may be, Rabaut had hastened to address him a memorial destined to inform him thoroughly in regard to the whole matter. This memorial has been preserved. The details which it contains, prove that the Prince had appeared entirely ignorant of the state and the sufferings of so great a number of Frenchmen. For that matter, the nobles in general knew very little more than he did. Who, among the fortunate of the age, was going to trouble himself about what was passing in Languedoc, in Quienne, in Dauphiné? In the days of the Camisards, well and good; but since the Huguenots had laid down their arms, since they suffered in silence, why should any one remember that they were suffering? Montesquieu was from one of the provinces they most frequently watered with their blood, and Montesquieu, in his *Persian Letters*, did not even condescend to mention them. His Usbek saw everything except them; criticized everything save the laws which oppressed them.

To this memorial were added seven demands:

Liberty of the Protestant galley slaves and prisoners;

Liberty of the children who had been taken away from their parents;

Legitimation of marriages;

* *History of the Churches of the Desert*, by Charles Coquerel. We are under many obligations to this curious and remarkable work.

Liberty of assembling, if not in places of worship, at least in private houses, or in the open air;

Toleration of pastors;

Liberty of alienating lands;

And free return for the Protestant emigrants.

Less could not be demanded; and yet Rabaut, on his arrival in Paris, had found the prince alarmed and discouraged, disposed to support at most one or two of these petitions; and, besides, he wished them less direct, less absolute.

It appears, however, that the pastor had every reason to be gratified with the personal reception which he met with; but in regard to these interviews with the prince, we have no details. We know only that he had two, that they led to nothing, and that he left the capital with but feeble hopes, which he was soon obliged to give up entirely.

XXIX.

PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS.

And now he returned to Paris. Would he be more successful than on his previous visit? The interest of the freethinkers of the day was directed in a strong degree towards the Protestants, during the last year or two. Enemies of Christianity, they could not have much more interest in any one particular doctrine and form of worship than in another; besides, they knew little, and cared little about knowing, the doctrines of the Reformation. But from humanity, they disapproved of the persecutions; from indifference, they considered them absurd and ridiculous; from a spirit of opposition, they were naturally inclined to support men whom they perceived engaged in a struggle with established authority.

Accordingly, certain saloons of Paris were tolerably well acquainted with what was passing in Languedoc. Rabaut was far more extensively known than he had any idea of. The names of his colleagues were not known, but his resumed,—and justly,—all that had been heard of their devotedness and their perils.

Philosophical opposition was at this moment at the height of its power. It was about to occupy itself with the expulsion of the Jesuits, and it began to be evident that this would be given up to it. It sought auxiliaries everywhere, in the meantime. The Protestants, it was thought, were more interested than any others in the ruin of these old authors of their miseries. Rabaut, at the time of his first journey, had had some relations with d'Alembert; but these interviews had been without result. The attempt of Damiens, which the party opposed to the new principles endeavored to attribute to the propagators of the latter, had caused these to assume a great reserve for some time, so much the more necessary because Madame de Pompadour, their protectress with the king, had been removed from court. When she had resumed her place, and the philosophical party saw her again in a position to act, they returned to their project of going to their mountains, to seek those allies at whom they secretly laughed, as fanatics of another sort, but in whose name they could speak very loudly, and with reason, of humanity, liberty, and all that was now beginning to find an echo everywhere.

There was, however, much to be taken into consideration, if not in regard to the merits of the case, at least in regard to the method to be followed. There was no doubt that the emancipation of the Protestants, if obtained, was a great point gained against the Jesuits; but it was evident, on the other hand, that in venturing to ask it previous to the fall of the

order, an arm would be put into the hands of the latter which would enable their cause to regain its ascendancy. Would it not be giving them the right to say, more boldly than ever, that their enemies were the enemies of the church? Would not all the clergy, and all Catholics still enemies of heresy, be seen to rally around the order to protect it? It was then necessary to bring forward the two things, to abandon one or the other at the right moment,—contriving, however, some means of taking it up again,—and finally promising nothing in good earnest, until after an attentive examination of all the resources which were found disposable.

It had been accordingly thought that they could not do better than to invite to Paris the man who was best cognizant of the state and the wishes of the Protestants. Rabaut had at first refused to heed these overtures. He had little confidence in men whose infidelity alarmed him, and whose good dispositions towards his co-religionists was evidently less the result of interest or affection for them, than of antipathy for others; but he had for a long time contemplated making a pastoral circuit in some of the centre provinces. This journey offering him the opportunity, he at length decided upon it. He had another plan besides, of which he spoke to none—that of presenting to the king himself a memorial in favor of the Protestants.

He had remained accordingly nearly six weeks on the way, making deviations sometimes of twenty leagues from the main road, and finding, almost everywhere, more Protestants and more perseverance than he had dared to hope for. He had gone, in the last place, to Meaux, to seek for the remains of one of the churches formerly most distinguished for its devotedness and enlightenment. He had found very little, but more, notwithstanding, than Bossuet had thought to leave there.

There, as everywhere, the Reformation had kept its place in the heart. In 1788, after one hundred, or, to speak more correctly, one hundred and fifty years, of persecutions and revocations—for the edict of Nantes was revoked, in fact, long before being so officially,—in 1788, we say, a million of Protestants was still to be found to salute the era of liberty opened to them by the reparatory edict of Louis XVI.

How does it happen that historians in general have said so little in regard to this miracle of perseverance and faith? If a like example had been furnished by the Catholics, it would be brought up to us, as an irrefragable proof of the heroism with which Rome alone, it would be said, can inspire her children. What has not been said of Ireland! And yet what a difference between the oppression which weighs upon her, and the sufferings of French Protestantism! "We lament," says a Catholic writer,* "the state of English Catholics. They are, without doubt, unfortunate, but their race is not branded. The anglican hatred against papacy has never gone so far as to inflict upon their families the desolating marks of concubinage or bastardy. Their children inherit their goods; they exercise their worship; they have priests. And then, suppose they should find the aversion they meet with in their country intolerable? Emigration is allowed them; the ports of the three kingdoms are open to them." To these incontestible details, we may add a fact which speaks still louder. In the memorial which the churches of the Desert addressed, in 1748, to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, their petitions are limited to the request to be put, "as French Protestants, on the same footing with Catholics in England." Thus, the condition which has been depicted in so many books, and which is still, at the

* Rulhière. Historical Information concerning the Revocation of the *Edict of Nantes.*

present day, recalled as the *ne plus ultra* of oppression, was the condition for which a million of French subjects were reduced to sigh, and to sigh in vain. Many times, under Louis XIV. and Louis XV., we see the English government soliciting in behalf of French Protestants. What would these solicitations have signified, if France could have reproached England with the same severities?

XXX.

"THE GREAT WORKSHOP."

About an hour before the moment when we saw Rabaut quit the Grève, a man, in his dressing-gown, was seated in a vast study. Before him was a table, loaded with papers; and on this table, against the wall, was a triple range of pasteboard boxes. You might read on one, *Articles to be written;* on another, *Articles to be distributed;* here, *Articles to be corrected;* there, *Articles finished;* there, *Correspondence.* A vast library occupied two sides of the apartment. Upon one of the most conspicuous shelves were seven folio volumes, magnificently bound.

These folios were the seven first volumes of the Encyclopedia. This studying room, with the boxes, was the "great workshop," of which Voltaire called himself "one of the journeymen," except when he called it, on some other occasion, "a great bear garden," with which he was delighted to have nothing more to do. This man in the dressing-gown was the chief of the workshop; it was d'Alembert.

Voltaire was not the only one, for that matter, who varied in his judgment in respect to the great work to which he brought his contribution; but, in reality, no one judged it with more severity or justice than himself.

"I am still enraged," he writes to the Count d'Argental,* "that the Encyclopedia should be degraded and disfigured by a thousand ridiculous articles, a thousand school-boy declamations, which do not deserve a place in the *Mercury*. These are my sentiments, and parbleu! I am right."

"I believe," he says in another letter,† "that the Encyclopedia will be continued; but it will probably finish still worse than it began, and it will never be anything but a great heap of rubbish."

"I flatter myself," he writes Diderot,‡ "that you will admit no more such articles as that on *Woman*, or *Fop*, etc., nor so many vain declamations, nor so many puerilities and commonplaces without principles, definitions nor instructions."

Was this counsel heeded? "The Encyclopedia," writes Diderot himself, at a later period, "was an abyss where all sorts of ragmen threw pell-mell an infinity of things, ill chosen, ill digested, good, bad, detestable, true, false, uncertain, but always incoherent and unsuitable."

With what object have we brought together these confessions—and from any one of the compilers of the Encyclopedia similar ones might be quoted? To prove that it was not a *chef-d'œuvre?* But that was proved long ago, and, besides, the work speaks plainly enough for itself. It would be curious and sadly instructive to bring into notice the manner in which these same men expressed themselves, when it was necessary to praise that as a whole, which they considered so bad in detail. The Encyclopedia was at that time the Book of books, it was "the most beautiful enterprise, the most beautiful monument of human genius;"§ it was the sacred ark around which in future the universe would bow, and which only fools, bar-

* April 4th, 1758. † March 22d, 1759. ‡ November 26th, 1758.
§ Grimm. *Correspondence.* Feb. 15th, 1793.

barbarians, and people unworthy of the name of men, could refuse to adore. Never had party spirit been more impudently sincere; never had the old adage, "None are clever but we and our friends," been more bluntly put forth, more pitilessly applied; never had the Church, at the height of her power, more boldly anathematized those who refused to bow to her infallible decrees. And of this party so united, this plan so concise, so closely followed out, the very existence, if necessary, could be denied. "The most odious thing," wrote Grimm, on the appearance of a pamphlet against the seventh volume, "is to strive to represent the Encyclopedia as a party in the State, bound together by opinions and interests, while, out of fifty authors contributing to this work, there are not three *who have the least intercourse with each other*." "They accuse of plotting," he says elsewhere, "a little number of scattered philosophers, who occupy themselves in seeking truth without cabal, without intrigue, without ambition, without credit, the greater number *without knowing each other*." And this, in all their apologies, was one of their most favorite themes. They sought truth, be it so, and we cannot say that they did not many times find it; but, after these and many other facts, it would be difficult to deny that they often looked upon falsehood as an excellent means of propagating it.

XXXI.

D'ALEMBERT AND DIDEROT.

This day, then, d'Alembert was at his post. He read a letter signed *Malesherbes*, whose contents seemed much to agitate him. He repeated the principal passages half aloud.

"—— In fact, *mon cher*, I can as yet do nothing. I under-

stand your impatience; I shall receive *your reproaches philosophically*, and even your insults; but I persist in saying that we must wait—"

"In wishing to serve you too quickly, I should risk destroying all means of serving you in future. If I wish to remain director of the Library, I must be more studious than any one to respect, at least externally, a decree of the king's council."

"—— This decree is only dated the 8th of March last year; thus it is not yet eighteen months since the Encyclopedia has been suspended. After the decree of 1752, which suppressed your first two volumes, nearly two years passed before the authorization to print them was granted. Wait then for some months longer—"

"Very willingly," murmured d'Alembert, "if we could be sure that then—and in that case, it would not be so unfortunate after all. The last five volumes have come out too rapidly, decidedly. If the Council forced us to give two years to each, it would do us a greater service than it thinks. Yes, but if it forced us to give three,—four,—six? Will it be more favorably inclined in a few months than now? Malesherbes hopes—we shall see. In the meantime, Diderot will be furious."

He looked at his watch. "These gentlemen do not come," he said, "and yet I should much prefer their arriving before Rabaut." He went again to the work of arranging papers. A quarter of an hour afterwards some one arrived. "Always the first, Diderot," said the master of the house.

"Do you mean that perhaps as a reproach?"

"A reproach? Come now! That to me, who only make Eulogiums—"*

"On the dead."

* His *Eulogiums on the Academicians.*

"In that case, *mon cher*, I must begin to think of one for the Encyclopedia."

"What do you say?" cried Diderot. "Is there anything new?"

"Old, rather. There is no way of abrogating this cursed decree."

"Bah! Who says so?"

"Read."

"Pooh!" he said after having finished; "this is the way with these court friends. It is not for nothing that a man's name is *Chrétien de Lamoignon de Malesherbes*. Wait! Four thousand subscribers—Wait!"

"I should like very well to know what else you would have to propose; and, above all, what you would do in his place."

"What I would do?—I—You are singularly composed, d'Alembert."

"You are singularly hasty, Diderot."

"Without me, do you suppose that you would have these seven volumes there?"

"Without me, we should never publish the eighth."

"Yes?"

"Yes. If I had let you put into it all the fine things with which you wished to cram them, never, so long as there is a king and a clergy in France, should we have been allowed to go on."

"Very grateful, indeed, your king and your priests! I would that the guts of the last—"*

"Enough, enough! Mon cher, if any are ungrateful, it is ourselves. What! These people, who could have stopped us at the first page, waited patiently for the end of the second

* It is well known that this phrase, which was the rage in '93 was one of his favorite expressions.

volume, and then of the seventh, in order to spare us a little annoyance? But do you know that that of itself is fine, most magnanimous, most Christian—"

"Most stupid!"

"If you choose. Seriously speaking, do you know, one of these days it will be a curious problem, if we should be obliged to remain at this seventh volume, to explain how we could have been allowed even to get so far? For, in fact, we might all be in the Bastile."

"Ideas cannot be put into the Bastile. They pierce the walls, the vaults—"

"No phrases, *mon cher*. That does very well for the public, otherwise called fools. Ideas can be very nicely put into the Bastile."

"Have I been less bold since I was sent to Vincennes? I was there—"

"A few months—just what was needed to set you up in the world. Just what it will be with our friend Morellet, who is to be let out again one of these days, they say. This is one of the great stupidities of this reign. We are tormented just enough to draw attention and interest to us. Our poor rulers are neither liberal enough to let us go on, nor courageous enough to punish us."

"It would be labor lost."

"You think so? If they chose to stop our mouths, I tell you, that they could stop them thoroughly."

XXXII.

HYPOCRISY.

He was right. But authority had begun to lose confidence in itself; and when it has reached that point, it is lost.

It was a curious spectacle, that of an absolute monarchy tolerating, even authorizing* men, all of whose efforts tended manifestly to the destruction, both of itself and the principles which it elsewhere proclaimed as necessary and divine.

But these men, it must be said, were little scrupulous in regard to the means which they took to make themselves tolerated.

We have already alluded to their boldness; what shall we say of their hypocrisy? The word is harsh, and yet we do not consider it too strong.

It is true that the fault was not entirely theirs. Despotism exacts dissimulation, and to a certain point authorizes it. But it would be difficult to prove, it seems to us, that they did not commonly carry it far, far beyond what honor would have allowed.

"Say to d'Alembert," wrote Voltaire this same year,† "that he is the hope of our little flock, and him from whom Israel expects the most. He is bold, but he is not rash: he is born to make hypocrites tremble, *without giving them any hold upon him.*"

Voltaire thought he was praising him But what did he bestow upon him here, in reality, if not a brevet of hypocrisy?

None of the encyclopedists deserved it better than d'Alembert, for none, on the one hand, was more constantly in favor at court, with the princes, and even with the clergy, and none, on the other, in private correspondence, was bolder in his ideas, more bitter in his hatreds, stronger or more shameless in his expressions. One is ready to ask if it is the same man;

* Perhaps our readers would like to know what Malesherbes, the king's representative in literary matters, was about at this time. He was reviewing for Rousseau, the proof-sheets of the "*New Heloise.*"

† Letter to Thiriot.

and ready to take into esteem Diderot, who at least knew how to hate and to curse without dissimulation or concealment.

Thus the counsels of prudence, otherwise called falsehood, were not spared to Diderot. Voltaire, the central leader, the general prompter of parts, shows sometimes, in this respect, a singular naïveté. "The devotees will say that Diderot has written a metaphysical work which they do not understand. *He has only to reply, that he has written no such thing.*"* And how often he used this admirable direction for himself! How he denied, if he did not exactly choose to confess a thing! What a masterpiece, in this respect, is his correspondence! There are more forms of lying to be found in it than the casuists have described. Read. See how enraged he becomes because people have dared attribute to him an abominable, infamous pamphlet, which he despises, together with its author, which he will not even read. Turn over the leaf. This pamphlet is his own. He speaks of it with enthusiasm; he is going to distribute it by thousands. Go on; he signs himself *Christ-moque*. He uses his ingenuity to revive his *Crush the wretch*. In one place, "I commend the *Wretch* to your attention;" or else, "Do not forget the Wretch," or still some other form. And in the following letter he cries, as in the preface to *Alzire;* "I am treated as a man without religion! This accusation of irreligion is often renewed, because it is the last refuge of calumniators. I will ask but one question. I ask which has the most religion, the calumniator who persecutes, or the calumniated who pardons?" He pardons—

* Letter to Duclos. 1760. For that matter, Diderot had only to allow his friends to lie for him. They all knew, for instance, that the "Esprit" of Helvetius was in part his work. Grimm denies this, and in what terms! According to him, nothing but *the most unexampled animosity and atrocity* could have spread abroad so abominable an invention.

yes. But turn over another leaf. There you see him swearing a deadly hatred to this *calumniator* who has spoken the truth, this *devotee* bold enough to attribute to him a book, of which he nevertheless avows himself the author, and you see him particularly amused at those who allow themselves to be taken in by his denials. He is here and there by turns, he changes from white to black with such an incredible facility, and, in fine, mocks and jeers so many people, that he seems to you to be laughing at you also,—just as, in reading ghost stories, one feels as if the ghost were at his heels.

But that in which they all excelled, was the being beforehand with the clamors of their adversaries, and crying out themselves still louder, and demanding justice,—and that from the government itself. D'Alembert, so calm in the midst of Diderot's rage, had, in 1758, gone so far as openly to solicit the punishment of Fréron, guilty of having attacked the Encyclopedia. "Literary criticisms," he wrote to Malesherbes, "should alone be permitted. Fréron, in accusing the Encyclopedists of irreligion, had overstepped his rights. He must absolutely have several months of the Bastile, or of For-l'Evêque." Thus they understood liberty; these men who wanted so much of it for themselves. His asserting Fréron to be too bold, was in itself ridiculously enough inconsistent; but to wish him to be punished precisely because he accused them of irreligion, that is to say, that of which, among themselves, they most gloried in being guilty,—it was of an impudence, and to speak plainly, of an infamousness, which had perhaps no parallel in all that was related of the Jesuits. Malesherbes made this apparent enough to them. His reply to d'Alembert is a lofty lesson of justice and decency. "But," said Morellet,* "when I represented to my friend, d'Alembert, Monsieur de Male-

* See in his *Memoirs*, the details of this strange affair.

sherbes' principles in regard to the freedom of the press. I could not get him to listen; and the philosopher stormed and swore, according to his bad habit." Nothing was wanting, in truth, in the picture of the century's oddities, but that of a chief censor, more tolerant than those who wanted no censure at all for themselves.

XXXIII.

THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS IN FULL CONCLAVE.

"And *I* say," said Diderot, "that they should not make me hold my tongue."

"You feel yourself endowed with a martyr's courage?"

"Why not?"

"*Why not!* That is magnificent! *Let him die*, may go and hide itself now! But I return to my assertion; if they only did to us the quarter of what they have done to the Protestants— *Apropos* of Protestants, my man is in Paris."

"Your man?"

"Yes; Rabaut."

"Good. And we shall see him?"

"This evening. He arrived only to-day by the coach from Meaux."

"Have you seen him?"

"An instant. I told him that I had a few friends here this evening, and that I begged he would join us. You will behave yourself, I hope?"

"I will try. But here is one who has great need of your recommendation. Good evening, Damilaville."

Damilaville was, in fact, one of those who most easily abandoned himself in private, to the verbiage of a boundless infidelity; but none, when it was necessary, could dissimulate

better than he could even with his intimates. There were only two or three even of these, who knew him to be the author of *Christianity unmasked*, a work recently branded by the Parliament.* First clerk at the office of the *Twentieths*,† the comptroler general's stamp, which was at his disposal, enabled him to pass free of postage, and without obstacles, through the whole kingdom, the letters, packets, and pamphlets of his friends. His position, and relations with Voltaire, gave him a rank in the coterie, which of himself he could never have possessed.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said with a half laughing, half serious air.

"Your good evening is very lugubrious."

"Good reason why."

"What is it?"

"It is that Desmarèts‡ has been at his tricks again,—it is that the pretty lady was almost in disgrace when I left Versailles,—it is that friend Choiseul is shaking in his shoes—"

"Ah! Good God.

"Ah! ha! Diderot said *good God!*—

> "'Nature which speaks in this extreme distress,
> To heaven has bid him raise his helpless hands.'"

"Hold your tongue, babbler."

> "'Forced homage which the frightened heart must pay
> To a stern God, forgotten until then—'"

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* "Our philosphers of the present day are more adroit than the ancients. They are not so dangerously vain as to put their names to their works. Damilaville is just dead. He was the author of *Christianity unmasked*. It was never known." Voltaire, letter to the Marquis de Villevieille.

† Tax upon the revenue. ‡ Confessor to the king.

"Be quiet, Damilaville," said d'Alembert gravely. "Besides, your quotation does not apply. You know very well, that our friend has not *forgotten* God."

"I thought of that,—but *denied* would spoil the line."

"Damilaville," resumed Diderot, "have you done?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, we hope that you will condescend to give us a few details."

"Details? Nobody knows them. It would appear that the king has been seized with one of those fits of melancholy, to which he has been subject for some years. The death of his daughter,* and that of the Princess de Condé,† his friend since childhood, constantly recurred to his mind. He was heard to talk of death, eternity, hell; and the marquise was not particularly flattered. In short, the confessor saw that there was room for him. He so well used his feet and his fists—"

"That the marquise is sent off."

"Or nearly so. Alas! she was beginning to be a little on the wane; for it may be doubted whether our dear king would have been so docile, if she had been fifteen years younger."

"Gentlemen," said d'Alembert, "you must confess that it is humiliating enough for philosophers to be reduced to cry, *Good God!* because a king is going to send away his mistress—"

"Or change her."

"It is possible."

"Is it our fault, I should like to know, if this woman was found to be of our way of thinking? Were we to turn Jesuits, because she took us under her protection? If she falls, well, we have only to act as if we had never had anything in common with her."

"Yes,—and if she comes into favor again, she will have only

* Louise Elizabeth, duchess of Parma, Dec. 6, 1790. † March 5, 1760

to act as if she had never had anything in common with us, which is as much as to say that we shall not get beyond our seventh volume. Gentlemen, we have courted this woman too much,—not you, Diderot, I know. Accordingly, you have been at Vincennes. But at any rate, be it our fault or not, for a long time our cause and hers have been identical. Now, this furnishes fine phrases in regard to infidelity supporting immorality, or immorality supporting infidelity, as La Motte so finely said in one of the pasty mandates which he fabricated for Monsieur de Narniers, bishop of Meaux. It was for Monsieur de Meaux, was it not, Marmontel?"

"For him, and a good many others," said Marmontel, who had just entered. "But Monsieur de Meaux had the misfortune to say, one day, to a wicked wit, 'Have you read my last mandate?' 'No, my lord,—and you?' replied the other."

"I have already heard that anecdote laid at the door of I do not know how many bishops."

"That does not hinder it from being true."

"Nor from being false either, perhaps. But, *se non è vero è ben trovato.*"*

"You know very well, gentlemen," said Damilaville, "that an anecdote may be, at the same time, true and false."

"Bravo! Escobar!"

"Well, yes. Let this one, for instance, be true or false, what is it that posterity will conclude from it? That there are bishops who have their mandates written by profane persons. Is it false?† Ask Marmontel."

"What!" cried Diderot. "You too, Marmontel, you have had a hand in this pie?"

* If not true, it is well conceived.—*Tr.*

† Montesquieu mentions somewhere, among the list of things most rarely found, *A mandate written by a bishop.*

"A man must live, dear sir."

"Sooner die!"

"Mercy, puritan, mercy! Old Boindin,* to whom I confessed the thing, laughed at it."

"And your slang?" asked d'Alembert.

"Our slang goes on as usual."

"What is that?" asked Damilaville.

"You do not know? It is a language which we have invented, Boindin and I, to use at the Café Procope, when we do not wish to be understood. The soul is *Margot;* liberty is *Jeanneton;* religion, *Javotte;* God, *Monsieur de l'Etre*, etc., etc. And it served us well; for the other day, a certain individual comes up to us, and says, 'Gentlemen, may I venture to ask who this Monsieur de l'Etre is, who has sometimes behaved so shamefully?' 'Sir,' replied Boindin, 'he is a spy.'"

"Excellent!" said d'Alembert. "But do n't have too much of it. They might take the *Mercury* away from you."†

"And it is singular enough as it is," added Diderot, "that it should have been given you."

"Why?"

"Because it is perfectly well known that you are one of us."

"Yes; but *I* do not break windows."

"So much the worse for you, morbleu!"

"Do not begin again, Diderot," said d'Alembert. "I hear a carriage. It is Helvetius or d'Holbach."

"Both, I believe," said Damilaville.

D'Alembert ran to meet them.

* One of the most famous atheists of the day. It is he whom Voltaire has described in the "*Temple of Taste*," under the name of *Bardou*.

† The *Mercury of France*, of which Marmontel was director. In it he published his *Moral Tales*.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you are very kind thus to visit, without ceremony, a poor academician."

"A very agreeable thing to be *poor*, after your fashion, d'Alembert."

"To accept my poor supper—"

"A truce to poverty, gentlemen," interrupted Diderot.

The two Mecænas of the Encyclopedia were accustomed to see him thus rude. He piqued himself on being more so with them than any one else.

They took their seats.

"I have just received a letter," said d'Holbach, "from d'Argens."

"From where?" they asked.

"From Aix. He does not know whether he will come to Paris."

"The king,* they say, has given him only a short leave of absence."

"And played him such a trick."

"What trick?"

"You do not know?"

"No. Tell us quickly."

"Upon entering Provence, the first thing he sees, in an inn, is a long mandate, in which he, d'Argens, finds himself entitled infidel, blasphemer, impious, atheist, etc. Woe to him, if he ever should set foot in the province! The parliament is ready to judge him; the chateau of If to receive him; and he is struck dumb, trembling. He reads the mandate and re-reads it: he dares neither advance nor recede. At length, he casts his eyes upon the preamble: 'We, by the grace of God, and of the holy see, *bishop* of Aix.' The royal mystifier had forgotten that Aix has an archbishop. But it was a long time,

* The king of Prussia.

they say, before d'Argens got over it. He was afraid this was only a misprint, and he saw a bailiff at every turn. His brother* at length re-assured him."

"Why is he not here," said Helvetius, "for the gala which is being prepared for us! For you know his *Chinese Letters* are to accompany my *Esprit*."

"And when is the auto-da-fé?" asked d'Holbach.

"Next Wednesday, I believe."

"Good! Just after the representation of the *Ecossaise*, for it is to be played on Tuesday.† The parliament is to be pitied. On Tuesday, its friends will be laughed at; on Wednesday, itself."

"And you shall come," said Helvetius, "and help me to laugh. I want to go and see myself burned. I have hired a window, a room. I will have carried there—but you will see. At any rate, you will come. It is an understood thing, is it?"

"It is understood," they said.

"Well," resumed d'Holbach, "you know the news from Versailles?"

"Alas, yes!" said Damilaville. "But here is some one who will perhaps tell us more. Well, newsman?"

It was Grimm. He had the reputation of always being the best-informed man in Paris. It was his taste, and also his business; for, as is known, he was newsmonger in title to a

* The Marquis d'Eguilles, president of the parliament of Aix.

† The *Ecossaise* of Voltaire, written against the enemies of the *Philosophers*, particularly Fréron. It had been printed for six months, as Voltaire had not intended to have it performed, and had not expected, moreover, to obtain permission. But as Palissot had had his "*Philosophers*" performed on the 2d of May, in which the Encyclopedia was shockingly abused, the authorities who permitted the attack, thought it proper also to permit the defence. The *Ecossais* was performed on the 29th of July.

number of German courts. His correspondence, addressed to the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, passed more or less openly through the hands of seven other sovereigns.

"News!" he said; "ah! news!"

And he looked at Diderot.

"Do you want a piece of news," he resumed, "good news?"

And he still looked at Diderot.

"What a fuss!" said the latter. "It is some time since we knew your news."

"Really! And it is?"

"Why, the disgrace of—"

"Great news, indeed!—news which all Paris has known for two hours! I should have considered myself treating you as provincials, if I had supposed you did not know it."

"The other is fresher, then?"

"Fresh or old,—that depends. Diderot, a volume of sermons is about to appear."

"How interesting that is!"

"Wait. And the author?"

"The Abbé Poulle, perhaps, who has been promising his for the last ten years."

"And who will promise them ten more, if not twenty. You know what the king said, who has gorged him with livings: 'The hen (poule) is too fat; it can no longer either sing or lay eggs.' No, it is not the Abbé Poulle; if it were he, you would trouble yourselves very little about it, I think."

"It is then?"

"It is,—it is our friend Diderot."

"Come, Grimm," said d'Alembert, "do not keep us any longer in suspense. Are these sermons? And if they are sermons, who are they by?"

"Did you not hear?"

"The joke is carried somewhat too far—"

"As true as we are here—"

"Is it quite certain that we are here?" asked d'Holbach.

"Ah! I beg pardon of the pyrrhonian party. Well! As true as we think we are here, and as I think I see you, and as I thought I smelt in the anteroom the odor of an excellent supper,—the sermons are by Diderot."

All eyes were turned upon him. He had the air of a man who understands and does not understand, who asks an explanation, and would rather not receive one.

"Let us see, Diderot," resumed Grimm. "Do you remember a certain priest?"

"Ah the scoundrel!" cried Diderot.

"Good. *Habemus confitentem reum.* Since the story comes to mind again, will you tell it yourself?"

"A fellow—some twenty years ago—a fellow whom they would not make priest in France, and who took it into his head to play the Bourdaloue in Gaudaloupe. He had not a tolerable sermon. He asked me to make him six. I had the kindness to make him six—"

"At twenty crowns apiece," interrupted Grimm.

Diderot bit his lips. La Motte was avenged. Marmontel rubbed his hands. "*Rather die!* Ha! ha! *Rather die!*"

"The end!" cried d'Holbach, laughing with all his might—"The end!"

"The end," resumed Grimm. "It is true, Diderot does not know that. The end is, that the said priest has returned, and that he learned, upon landing, the progress which our friend has made in paths which are not those of heaven. Then, in order to revenge himself, he resolved to publish the sermons; so much the more, he says, as they have had a great success over there, that this success weighs upon him, like ill-gotten

gain, and that the only way of quieting his conscience is to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Furthermore, no offence to Diderot, he has in nowise the air of a stupid fellow, and was not driven from France; it was of his own will that he went to convert our not very convertible colonists. He seems to me a profound devotee. Take care of yourself; the bone to be gnawed is too juicy for him to let it go."

"He shall let it go, notwithstanding."

"Ah! you think so?"

"He will let go, I tell you. Is he not of the diocese of Meaux?"

"I believe so."

"Good. I am safe."

"What do you mean?"

"I understand what I mean?"

XXXIV.

RABAUT.

The last guest arrived. It was Rabaut.

The emotions of the Grève had left their traces upon his features. His brow was more than usually furrowed with wrinkles, the premature fruit of so much labor and anguish, but these destroyed nothing of the still youthful ardor of his grave and piercing glance. He was like an old man with all the vigor of fresh manhood, or a man of ripe age with all the aspect and authority of an old man.

His arrival caused a certain sensation. All, save d'Alembert, now saw him for the first time. To the curiosity excited by the sight of any man who has been very much talked of, his presence added the effect of a remarkable physiognomy,

upon which might be read, as it were, all that had been related of him. The mountaineer, and the educated man, the humble Christian, and the head of a party, all that he was, all that was known of him, was at once recalled by his aspect.

It was, accordingly, with a certain respect that these gentlemen, ordinarily so little respectful, advanced several steps to meet him. Even Diderot felt himself almost impressed. Impressed, it is true, after his own fashion, for he looked upon Rabaut merely as a very singular man; but the singular, the extraordinary appealed vividly to his imagination, and occasionally with his atheist mind he rose into the same regions as others with their Christian minds.

If it had not been for this preoccupation, the start which Rabaut gave upon hearing him mentioned, would probably not have escaped him. The Protestant had scarcely expected to find himself in such company. Not that he was ignorant of his host's relations with the infidels of the day, but he had not imagined that he would bring him into contact with a Diderot, a d'Holbach, with those men, in fact, against whose doctrines he would have entered into an alliance with the Pope himself, rather than appear their friend and ally.

Thus it was not without an effort that he replied to the polite remarks addressed to him. They, on their side, began to look upon him as tolerably distant, and even not very polite; but they did not dream of attributing this to anything but his want of habitual intercourse with the world. In their eyes, Protestantism was but the elder brother of infidelity. Men of opposition, it seemed to them that all who lived as they did, in a state of opposition, ought, for that reason alone, to look upon them as allies and friends. They knew well that the Protestants had retained a profound and ardent faith, but they did not see why the faithful should have any more difficulty in

accepting them, though unbelievers, for friends, than they, unbelievers, had in uniting with believers.

Besides, in their eyes, the establishment of toleration was less an end than a means. "When I published my 'little work,'"* says Morellet, "d'Alembert and Diderot were enchanted to see a priest opposing intolerance; persuaded, as they were, that it was impossible to be tolerant without abandoning religious principles. In which, I maintained that they were mistaken," etc. Thus, if they wished that the Protestants should be tolerated, it was chiefly because toleration appeared to them a step, a great step towards infidelity. Curious error, which might assist in explaining their own intolerance against all that did not belong to them. If toleration in religion appeared to them abandonment of faith, toleration in philosophy might also seem to them the abandonment of philosophy itself.

XXXV.

AT TABLE.—RABAUT'S NARRATIVE.

The supper fortunately came, to put an end to all this mutual embarrassment.

On arriving at the dining-room, Helvetius, to whom the head of the table was offered, offered it in his turn to the new comer. Rabaut declined; but as all pressed him to do so, he accepted the arm chair which was there placed. Great was their surprise, when he was seen to join his hands, and with his eyes cast down to make a short and internal prayer. All looked at each other, but none smiled. It was because there was in him neither the affectation of the bigot, nor the timidity of the half

* *Little treatise upon great subjects.*

pious, but a perfect, striking naturalness. He prayed as he would have drunk a glass of water.

Soon, he appeared more at his ease, with some, at least, of the guests. His horror for the infidels was, after all, not one of those silly horrors which certain defenders of religion feel, or seem to feel. He hated the principles, not the men. He regretted not having contained himself better at the first moment, and by an affectionate politeness, repaired to the best of his power this involuntary infraction of the laws of charity.

It is true that none but indifferent things were talked of, and then there was but little conversation. In spite of the amphitryon's depreciation of his poor supper, the dishes were delicious, the wines excellent.

"Ah!" said Helvetius, "it will soon be impossible to entertain you philosophical gentlemen!"

It was he, as is well known, who gave the most magnificent entertainments. They preferred, however, d'Holbach's dinners, at which their liberty was boundless. "It is there," says Morellet, "that Diderot, Doctor Roux, and the good baron himself, dogmatically established the system of absolute atheism, with a conviction, an honesty, and a sincerity edifying even to those who, like myself, did not believe in their instructions." Atheism had become a kind of religion for some men.

"It must be confessed," added d'Holbach, "that it is a good thing sometimes to tap the cask of Diogenes."

"If at least he only had *one!*" said Damilaville.

A great shout of laughter, of which Rabaut did not understand the cause, received these last words.

"Ah! the ungrateful wretches!" cried d'Alembert. "This is my reward for having given them tolerable wine. You must know, Monsieur Rabaut, that because I stand pretty well

at court, and am not at sword's points with everybody, these gentlemen say that I keep my philosophy in a number of casks, and serve every one according to his taste. If it were so, would I be wrong? More flies are taken with—"

"A truce to proverbs!" said Grimm. "Do not make us chew the air. It would be a pity in truth. Let us suppose that Damilaville said nothing."

"Oh the charitable man! He is indulgent to me because the chicken is tender, and he wishes to lose no time. You eat nothing more, Monsieur Rabaut?"

"I have finished, sir."

"In a quarter of an hour?"

"I have more frequently dined in ten than in twenty minutes."

"Let me offer you—"

"Do not force me to refuse."

"Inexorable? Well, let us say no more of it. But since we cannot prolong your supper, you might add a charm to one's—"

"I would most willingly. But how?"

"You do not guess?" said Helvetius. "Relate us something of your life. Some passages, I mean, some details. Something which can be related at table."

"But in truth I should not know where to begin, or where to end."

"Why the subject is already found. These dinners of ten minutes, of which you were speaking,—with how many adventures must they be connected!"

"Your dinners!—that is it—your dinners!" cried the other guests.

"*My dinners!*" he said, laughing,—and it was the first time they had seen him laugh,—"that is a singularly ambitious

title. With that exception, you are perfectly right. Yes, the history of my dinners would be a curious one. Months have passed without my eating, for two days in succession, at the same hour, and at the same house; months during which I never once dined without being obliged to post a sentinel to give me notice in case of an alarm. A necessary precaution, for many times the house has been surrounded, many a time I have been obliged to disappear in the midst of the repast. Very rarely could I tell on one day, where and with whom I should dine the next. In short, with the list of places where I have dined, you would have the geography of all the south of the kingdom, cities, towns, villages, hamlets. At the inns, I have gone by the name of Paul, Denis, Pastoural, Théophile, Théo, Tuabar; it was under this last name, an anagram of Rabaut, that I came to Paris. Thus, gentlemen, if you should ever have occasion to speak of me, have the goodness to remember, that it was Monsieur Tuabar who had the honor of supping with you this evening.

"Many times I have had that of dining with officers of the police, priests, commissioner's clerks. I have heard them speak of me, of my endless journeys, of my boldness in braving them, and my good luck in escaping them. I have taken part in the conversation; I related myself some of these exploits of which they had been the dupes. Alas! I blushed in secret at the sad expertness which I had been obliged to acquire in the art of deceiving. I perceived with sorrow upon examining my conscience, that a malicious pleasure was often mingled with my joy at escaping. Therefore, I finally took the resolution, no longer to relate to any one, friend or enemy, these miserable smuggling exploits.

"It is not one of the least painful sides of our situation, this perpetual mingling of adventures, frequently ludicrous, with

the gravest matters. It would cost me less openly to expose my life, than to protect it by these endless precautions. One day that I was pursued, my friends forced me to disguise myself as a woman. On the point of being captured, I quitted my disguise. I could not endure the idea of being taken in this costume, and I preferred being lost by leaving it, to being saved in running the chance of rendering my person and ministry ridiculous. God was merciful; I escaped."

"You have never been taken?" asked Helvetius.

"Should I be here?"

"You never will be taken."

"Oh! we will let the future alone. And yet I have often said this same thing to myself. Danger makes us fatalists. One would say that in respecting you, it promises always to do so. On this ground, no soldier, who had gone safely through twenty battles, would be surer than I am of dying peacefully in his bed. But once more, we will let the future alone. The future is to be—what God wills."

He ceased for a moment. They looked at him in silence.

"And why," he resumed, "why should God be bound to let me end my career in peace? If he has called me to daily struggles, these struggles have their daily reward. Has not God recompensed me, largely recompensed me, in the very good which he gives me the courage and means of doing? The blessing of those whom I have consoled and fortified, the tears of joy which I have seen flow on my appearance, these are an imperishable treasure in my past, which is worth more, far far more than the little I have done to amass it.

"One day, after a long journey, I arrived, worn out, in a village. I found there a note, which called me two leagues away. A dying man wished to see me, and I was told there was not a moment to be lost. I confess that I hesitated. The

night was coming on cold and black. A good fire, a good shelter, a pious meeting already given out in the village, all conspired to keep me. I read in all eyes an ardent desire that I should stay, but no one in the whole house went so far as to say a word of it to me. Then I understood that it was God who spake to me by their silence. 'These good people,' I said to myself, 'are convinced that it is my duty to go. They are right, I will go. I shall do them more good by going, than by the best of sermons.' And I went. The road was terrible. I had not gone half a league before I came to snow, little at first, then, as I ascended,—for it was in our mountains,—it became knee deep. The path was not trodden. I lost my way. I had no alternative than to pass my night in this desert, or to return as I came, following, if I could, my own foot-prints on the snow. Suddenly I perceived a far off light. It is the village which I seek. It is the lamp in my sick man's house. How did I know that? I did not; but I never doubted it. It was again God who spoke to me by this distant light, and who, in the midst of the darkness, said to me, 'I am with thee.' Yes, He was indeed with us in that house of mourning. What resignation! what faith! what transports of joy on my arrival! The door was opened me by a son of the dying man. He was ready to fall upon his knees. 'He has come!' he cried; 'father! father! he is here!' And beside himself, he drew me into the sick man's room. 'It is he! it is he!' repeated the father, clasping his feeble hands; and his eyes, already dimmed by death, were moistened with a last tear. He was one of the oldest wrecks of our unfortunate churches. He had seen the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; he had gone through all our trials, and as I learned, had just suffered another. A fanatic priest had besieged his dying bed. The threat of being dragged on a hurdle, as the edicts order, that of the confisca-

tion of his property, which is the consequence, nothing had been able to shake him. To the first, he replied that this body was of little importance to him, provided his soul went to God: to the second, his children had replied that they preferred losing their patrimony to receiving it stained by an apostasy. This struggle had exhausted his strength. He had now but to die; but wished to die in my arms. He had for a long time told me himself that this was his desire; for three days it had been his fixed idea—and I arrived in time. I was there. Now do you understand me? Do you think that it is needful to look forward to a future reward, when God thus pays you, step by step, for each duty accomplished, each consolation given, each word pronounced in His name?

"Do not imagine, however, that all our joy is limited to beholding sainted deaths, and appreciating the happiness of being faithful. If persecution allows us a few quiet days, we are happy; between two tempests, we know how to enjoy all the delights of beautiful weather, as the soldier, between two battles, recovers all his carelessness and gaiety. But our carelessness is a profound faith in the eternal vigilance of Him whose soldiers we glory in being; our gaiety,—it is always more or less that of the ancient martyrs, when the day before their execution, it was permitted them once more to unite in a fraternal banquet. And we too have our banquets, but rarely unless the occasion is a serious, a touching one. One day it is a friend who brings us news from Germany, Switzerland, or England. Must he not be able to tell our refugees that he has been seated at table with us, in order that afterwards, seated at theirs, he may transport us among them in spirit, as he has already transported them to us? Another day it is one of our mountaineers who has passed ten, twenty, perhaps thirty years at the galleys for his faith. They are tired of feeding him,

they let him return to his village. Must we not celebrate his safe arrival? Is he not returned a conqueror to his fire-side? And another day, perhaps it is a wedding feast. But you will hear there no songs nor laughter. What, to us, would signify noisy wishes, common-place felicitations? Is there not a sword hanging over the head of each guest, and over the newly-married couple more than any others? They have committed, in marrying in the desert, one of the crimes the most pitilessly punished by the edicts which rule us. How many have been torn asunder the very day upon which they were united! No; we have none of the ceremonies which the world has. We pray,—we are joyful, but because we have prayed much. Those wishes which we may not form for earth, we have transferred to heaven.

"But our real, our great festivals, are our meetings in the Desert. On this point our history is well enough known; I could tell you nothing that you do not know. But what I can assure you is, that all that can be related of them is rather below than beyond the truth. You must have lived among us, to have an idea of what an assembly is to our faithful ones, where they are to have a pastor, where they are to sing, pray, and be instructed in common. Never could a fête at Versailles be an object of more ambition, arrangements, and impatience above all, than many an one of our poor, humble assemblies, which is perhaps destined to send its pastor to the scaffold, the men to the galleys, and the women into prisons or convents for life. The arrangements are sometimes commenced two, three, six months beforehand. All must have notice of it, and yet nothing must transpire. If there is a rumor of any hostile project, all must be warned in time, for fear that some, as has often happened, should find soldiers where they looked to find their brethren. Thence comes an organization, which might

be thought habitually plotted, but which has formed itself gradually, through the sole influence of danger. If we are sometimes several months in concerting the plan of an assembly, still one is often convoked and finished in a few hours. Often, upon arriving unexpectedly in some of our villages, I have had but to say a word to have around me, a short time after, in some retired valley, one or two thousand of the faithful. The convocations are arranged and distributed with a perfect regularity; the choice of a place, the disposition of sentinels, all is arranged with admirable art, or rather instinct.

"And yet, even in the most peaceful times, we can never be sure of finishing in quietness; never can one of the hearers be sure that a ball may not stretch him dead upon the very spot where he listens; and in our history, the list of these bloody surprises is a long one. Four years ago, the 8th of August, some ten thousand at least were assembled in one of the deserts of Lower Languedoc. I was about to ascend the pulpit. Suddenly, on an eminence was perceived the uniform, but too well known, of the regiment of Brissac. Shots were fired, and not a ball missed in this compact multitude. They fled, cried, struggled. The soldiers re-loaded their arms, and fired again, and this they repeated four times. They were but fifteen or twenty. One word from me, and they would have been torn to pieces. But no,—that submission which I had constantly preached, I was able yet to recall, to impose upon these hearts boiling over with anger and indignation. We carried away our dead and wounded; and from the midst of the groups who fled, there still arose, here and there, the fragments of the interrupted psalm.

"Ah! how they penetrate the very soul at such moments, these rude songs of our forefathers! The psalms are our epic; and the most profoundly truthful epic which has ever been

written or sung by any nation; an endless work, of which each of us becomes afresh the author; a sacred treasure, where are gathered beside our patriotic remembrances, the remembrances, hopes, joys and griefs of each. Not a verse, not a line, which is not a whole history, or a whole poem. This was sung by a mother beside the cradle of her first-born; this was chanted by one of our martyrs, as he marched to his death. Here is the psalm of the Vaudois returning, armed, to their country; here that of the Camisards marching on to battle. This was the line interrupted by a ball; this was half murmured by an expiring father, who went to finish it among the angels. O our psalms!—our psalms! Who in human language could ever tell what you say to us in our solitudes, upon the soil crimsoned with our blood, and under the vault of heaven, from whose height look down upon us those who have wept, prayed, and sung with us!"

XXXVI.

DISCUSSION.—ERRONEOUS IMPRESSIONS.—PROPHETIC.

He ceased. What must not be, in the assemblies of the Desert, the influence of a man who could describe them thus, and to infidels! But for the moment he had transformed these infidels into believers; he had made them envy him his faith, his zeal, and the most moved of all was the most infidel, Diderot. His blood had boiled at these pictures, at once so true and so romantic. If he had not been Diderot, he would have wished to be Rabaut.

"Gentlemen," said the latter, after a moment's silence—and his expressive countenance announced a change in the current of his ideas—"excuse this emotion."

"That will be easy for us to do," said d'Alembert, "since we have shared it."

"I have too much forgotten," he resumed, as if without hearing him, "that I was speaking to men—who could not understand me."

"It is this observation, rather, which appears to us difficult to understand. We have listened to you, it seems to me—"

"With interest. I saw it, and thank you for it. You have been touched, and would be more so, I hope, if you should ever come to hear and see the things of which I have told you, —but only touched as you would be by all descriptions of the same style, given you whether by a priest or a minister, a Christian or a pagan. And you will say none the less, in an hour from now, of me and mine, and whoever has a belief, and suffers for its sake, 'Poor fool!' Am I wrong?"

Abruptly brought back to the ground of their usual feelings, our encyclopedists could not contradict, and dared not assent to this observation of Rabaut. They had perceived between themselves and him an abyss, of whose existence they were conscious, but which they had imagined much less wide and deep.

"I must confess," said d'Alembert, "that you are not, it appears, what we in general suppose you to be. I had proof of this three years ago, in my quarrel with the pastors of Geneva, for having supposed I was doing them an honor in making them out to be nearly deists.* Protestantism declaring itself founded on the freedom of examining the Scrip-

* In the Encyclopedia; article *Geneva*. The pastors and Rousseau were not the only ones who thought the article a strange one. "The whole thing must be read. It is impossible not to be struck with its extravagance. Our philosophers are sometimes very foolish."—GRIMM, December, 1758.

tures, we are inclined, we freethinkers, to look upon it as something cooler, calmer, more—"

"More reasonable, is it not?"

"At least more *reasoning*."

"You make us after your own image, gentlemen. In certain respects, you are right; in many others, you see that you are in the most complete error. You call yourselves our friends: you are so in this sense, at least, that you pity us—that you ask that we should be left in peace. But you have already done us, and continue to do us, much harm. You only plead for us, in establishing, in the first place, between your principles and ours, an identity which is not utterly without foundation, but of which we support the whole odium. It is thanks to you that liberty of examining the Scriptures, claimed two centuries ago as alone leading to a true faith, is so generally regarded as leading to infidelity. That it may lead to it, is evident; *all* liberty may be abused. That you resemble us, and are in a certain sense the sons of Luther and Calvin, it may be; but if Luther and Calvin returned to the world, they would break with you much more absolutely than they did with the church."

"I suppose," said Marmontel, "that we should be at least in quite as much of a hurry to break with them, as they with us. Luther,—he may do; but Calvin! I should feel very little flattered, for my part, to be called his son."

"I understand. 'He had an atrocious soul.' It is Monsieur de Voltaire who has said it; and as Monsieur de Voltaire has always been, especially in history, of an exactitude which is—astonishing, this is repeated by all authors. It would, however, be a good thing, gentlemen, if, before writing our history, you would deign to study it a little. You, Monsieur de Marmontel, are quite at liberty to arrange the history of the Lower

Empire after your own fashion. You give your book out for what it is—a romance,—and Belisarius has no descendants whom you risk wronging by giving them an ancestor after your own fashion. With us it is different. Since Monsieur de Voltaire has invented this '*atrocious soul*,' we can no longer discuss with a Catholic that he does not throw it up to us. When we talk of our sufferings, we are asked of what we complain; when we say '*Toleration*,' they reply '*Servetus*.' Why should they not make use of him? Has not Monsieur de Voltaire said, still apropos of 'the *atrocious soul*:' 'The ashes of Servetus are smoking still!' This time, he has spoken the truth. Yes, thanks to him, there are still people enough who keep up this odious smoke, in order that it may conceal from the eyes of the multitude the smoke of so many other funeral piles whose memory they would gladly annihilate. You, you are all ready, gentlemen, without bad intention perhaps, but with a deplorable levity, to put this weapon into the hands of our enemies. The death of Servetus alone has inspired you with as much, nay, more indignation, than thousands of similar deaths which at that time excited the consternation of all Europe. Why so much pity for one man?—why so many attacks against his judge, when you content yourselves with vague expressions of horror against the church which has killed men by hundreds of thousands? It is because Servetus was an infidel; the others were only heretics, Christians, fools. They died for religion, for which you care very little; but, according to you, Servetus at least suffered for reason. As for the martyrs for their faith, so much the worse for them; and doubtless it will one day be denied that there ever existed any, as Monsieur de Voltaire is already on the way to deny the persecutions of the first three centuries.* But for a martyr

* It is known that this was one of the historical theses of Vol-

of philosophy, or infidelity,—which is unfortunately the same thing at the present day,—how would it be possible to weave too many crowns!—how express too much horror for him accused of having sent him to the stake!

"Is the accusation even correct? Was Calvin really the author of the death of Servetus? To be sure I see Calvin accuse him,—and let it be declared whether he could do otherwise,—but I see the judges unanimous in condemning him. I see Calvin approve of the condemnation to death, but I see the Swiss churches unanimous in voting this form of death, and demanding the execution of the decree. Why then this rage against Calvin? Why defend yourselves only by paying court to our enemies at his expense? And why, above all, do you not distinctly add, that if we have sometimes persecuted, it was not because we were Protestants, but because we were still too much Catholics?

"Another point, in regard to which you come to the assistance of our enemies. One of their favorite manœuvres is to represent us as professing a religion founded by Luther and Calvin. They well know that these two great men constantly repelled the charge of founding anything themselves, of teaching anything in their own name. 'Was I then crucified for you?' said Luther to those who took the name of Lutherans. They know that all we believe, we believe because the Bible appears to us to teach it, and in nowise because Luther or Calvin asserted it; and they persist none the less in affirming that our religion had its origin in the brains of these men, that our doctors are their slaves, and our believers their adorers. Well, what they do from dishonesty, you do from—what shall I call it? Find the word yourselves, I appeal to your con-

taire. He put it forth, with a ridiculous crudity, in his "*Reflections upon Toleration.*"

sciences. Never having sought to know exactly in what we differ from the Catholics, you confine yourselves to making us as a mass disciples of Luther and Calvin, as the Turks are those of Mahomet; and this old calumny which wounds us more than any other, which in the eyes of the multitude legitimates all sorts of antipathy and severity against us,—it is you who authorize it.

"In another point of view what harm the grave Monsieur de Montesquieu has done us! Sometimes, with his theory on the influence of climate, he insists that the north is essentially the country of Protestantism and the republican spirit; and our enemies conclude from this, in the first place, that our faith cannot belong to France, and then that we cannot be loyal subjects to a king. Sometimes, every repressed religion becomes, according to him, *repressing*, so soon as it is freed from oppression; and our enemies begin to exclaim that once free, we would persecute in our turn. Sometimes he says: 'When a religion is established in a country, it must be tolerated; when it has not been received there, let it not be received;' and our enemies set to work to show that we are not *received*, that we ought not to be, that there would be folly in permitting us to exist. You see how, with the best intentions, there is harm still done us, because nobody cares to take the trouble to see what we are, what we believe, what we want.

"And further, what are your injuries to us and our history, when we have so much against Christianity itself with which to reproach you? In the first place, when you attack the errors and abuses of the Roman Church, it is very rarely that you distinguish between this corrupted Christianity and that of the earliest ages. It is not your fault if the apostles, and Jesus Christ himself, are not generally looked upon as the founders of the Papal despotism, of the Inquisition, and all the most

absurd and odious things that men have taught or established in their name. And yet you are acquainted with our sacred books. You have read them to criticise them it is true, but nevertheless you have read them. You know, consequently, much better than the generality of Catholics, how far these abuses are from being found there, even in germ; and you persist none the less, in throwing upon the Christian religion all the ridicule and odium of that which has been added to it. One would say that the Church awes you, that you dare not attack her alone, that in order to gain courage, you have need to aim your blows at her through everything that is most sacred."

"But," objected d'Holbach, "you know that we do not admit the distinction which you reproach us with not enouncing with clearness enough. The Bible is better than the Church, agreed; but for us, one is not more sacred than the other."

"I know it," he resumed. "Thus it is not in the name of the Bible, since you do not believe in it, nor in the name of God, since you do not believe him the author of the Bible, that we beg you to be more consistent and more honest. There is here, besides the religious question, a human question, a simple affair of honor. You see the Christian world divided into two parties. You agree with us in declaring the one to contain a thousand errors, a thousand abuses; in the other you perceive naught upon the altar save a book in which these errors are not found, in which these abuses are not contained. What matters it that this book may appear to you to teach *other* errors? Justice forbids that upon it should fall all the responsibility of those errors which could only have been taught in forgetting it or trampling it under foot. More particularly does she forbid it, if there are people for whom this distinction is a matter of life

and death. You demand that we should be tolerated; it is well, but why do you not distinctly say that we appear to be nearer the truth, more reasonable, more Christian, in fine—although this word seems to you no praise,—more Christian, I say, than those who oppress us?"

"We should do you more harm than good," said Helvetius. "It is then that your enemies would say that Protestantism is brother to Infidelity."

"Do not trouble yourselves as to what would happen," resumed the minister. "The day when all men who, whatever their belief, are not Catholics, shall have the sincerity to say that Protestantism appears to them more reasonable and more Christian, on that day Protestantism will have made, in spite of you, an immense step in the world. The multitude would ask us what we believe. 'Take and read,' we should say; 'here is the Bible.' And they would take it and read it; and the religion at which they would arrive, would be the religion of the Bible,—our religion. It is thus that you could, and if I may say it, that you ought to serve us, rather than in demanding for us, as you would do for Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans, an unfounded and insulting toleration."

"The Bible! Always the Bible!" murmured some of the friends of d'Alembert. "You consider it then very powerful."

"If we are wrong, gentlemen, you will allow that it is a pardonable error in those to whom this book has given strength to suffer so much."

"It can effect much, it is evident," was the reply; "but with those who believe in it only."

"Without doubt,—but all can believe in it."

"Why then cannot we succeed in doing so?"

"Why? Because you *will* not. Because there are moments

when God is pleased to blind the worldly wise, or to allow them to blind themselves. Because we are now in one of these fatal periods, and shall not escape from it until we have emptied to the dregs the bitter chalice which you are preparing for humanity. This appears to you very mystical, does it not? I shall, accordingly, not strive to make you admit it, or even understand it. I should not succeed. The ways of God must be accomplished. But, believe me, a time will come when nothing will be plainer than these words now so obscure. If they could be engraved there, upon this wall, they would be seen to shine, in a hundred years, with a terrible radiance, and there would then be no eye-lid which this radiance should not pierce. Then will have been recognized the emptiness of the doctrines which you preach. Then your impotence to found anything durable, will be attested by the ruins of all that you now think to build. Then infidels themselves,—for there will always be infidels,—will defend themselves from the charge of resembling you. And during all the tempests which must be traversed before reaching this period, persecuted or not, bound or free, there will be none truly happy, but those who lean upon God rather than man, upon this book"—

And he seized from beside the seven volumes,—for they had returned to the library,—an old Bible of Sacy.

"—— on this book, I say, and not—"

"Not on these others, you mean?" said Helvetius, pointing to the seven. "Courage—finish. Well, gentlemen, perhaps he is not so far wrong, after all. 'Perhaps the Bible may bury us all,' said Monsieur de Fontenelle, one day."

And Rabaut, who had been rapidly turning over the leaves, laid the book upon his knees, and joining his hands, read slowly and solemnly:

"And Jesus said, I thank thee, oh Father, that thou hast hid

these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.'" (*Matt.* xi.)

XXXVII.

INSINCERITY OF AUTHORS AND READERS.

It was not the first time that Rabaut expressed these fears, these reproaches, these hopes,—these prophecies, we had almost said. His correspondence abounds in observations of this kind. No one, at this epoch, better judged the present, nor more plainly foresaw the future.

This future has proved him right. The eighteenth century has accomplished its work, and we are not of those who can bestow upon it naught but curses; for if it pulled down much, there was much to be pulled down; but its incapability to construct is, at the present day, as Rabaut predicted, universally perceived and admitted. "The infidels themselves," he had said, "will defend themselves from a resemblance to you;" and few people, in fact, are to be found who confess themselves infidels after the manner of Voltaire, d'Holbach, and Lamettrie. Some few old men, who have forgotten nothing and learned nothing, are the only Voltairians whom we have left. Some obscure socialists are the only representatives of the materialism and the atheism of the day. Believers or not, all men of intelligence, learning, or feeling, openly declare that they wish to make other paths, and to resemble as little as possible this almost extinct family.

In the midst of these changes, one thing has remained the same. All the reproaches which Rabaut addressed, as a Pro-

testant, to the free-thinkers of his day, might be re-produced by the Protestants of the present time.

Take—in France, for instance—twenty or thirty new works, no matter what, serious or not, histories, romances, treatises of any kind.

How many will there be, among this number, who declare themselves Catholics? Three or four.

How many will there be which are so—that is to say, whose authors submit themselves really and fully, not in theory and words, to the authority of their church? One or two; and even in their cases, you feel, generally, that you must not look too closely into the matter, and that the author accepts, in reality, only what suits him.

How many, on the other hand, will you find, still in the same number, who openly declare themselves non-Christian? One or two.

How many, who, without declaring themselves infidels, may nevertheless be looked upon as hostile to Christianity? Three or four.

Thus, the great majority of authors, accepting Christianity, openly use the right to accept it as they choose to understand it.

Now, it is this right which was claimed by the Reformation. To make use of it, to any extent whatever, is to admit the fundamental and originating principle of Protestantism; that, namely,—even if the individual remain, in spite of this, faithful to certain Catholic doctrines,—of *protesting*, of being a Protestant.

Well, among the numerous authors who make use of this right,—often for bad purposes, it is true, but that would only be a reason the more for acknowledging it,—among these authors, we say, how many are there who extend their hand to the Protestants? How many do you find who have the

frankness to say "We are no longer Catholics—we deny the Catholic Church" and to express a little sympathy for those who denied it when it was perilous so to do? Most frequently, not one.

XXXVIII.

ACCOUNTED FOR.

Why is this?

With some, it is timidity. They dare, it is true, to attack, one after the other, all the bases, all the doctrines of the church, but they persist in retaining the appearance of respect for the church herself.* It would soon put an end to this singular compromise, if the church herself would bring the thing to an understanding. If she should distinctly say to these people what she thinks of them, they would then be forced to confess that they do not belong to her—that they never have belonged to her. But she is too prudent to provoke any such explanation. So long as those who quit her do not sound a trumpet, she is not going to sound the tocsin. All she wishes is, that you should not go out at the great breach made by Luther. After that, go out which way you will; the sentinels have orders not to see you pass. Still, though under different forms, we have here the same spirit which doomed to death the courageous preachers of the Desert, and which, with the exception of some insignificant severities, left the chiefs of infidelity in peace.

Besides the timid, you have the superficial—those who, completely separated from Catholicism in all essential things, are attached to it, or imagine themselves to be so, by the forms. They do not believe in the pope; but Saint Peter's,

* "Our church," as the *Charivari* said, some time since.

at Rome, is such a magnificent edifice! They do not believe in the mass; but a high mass, in music, is so beautiful! They do not believe, in short, any of those things rejected by the Protestants; but the Protestant places of worship are so cold, so bare! How can one become Protestant! Thereupon a new compromise, which the church is very careful not to destroy. Grant her that she is beautiful, she will not inquire if you think her good. She will even allow you, if necessary, to deny this.

And, lastly, come the ignorant, by far the most numerous class. It is confounding to see to how many men, and, above all, to *what* men, this title may be given in these matters, without the slightest trouble in proving that they merit it. Sometimes it is a historian, throwing floods of light upon the most insignificant facts of the middle ages, and confining himself in regard to the Reformation, to what is to be read in the most superficial manuals of history; sometimes, a man announcing himself to be a Christian philosopher, and who in re-constructing Christianity according to the Bible, does not appear to perceive that it is precisely what the Reformers have done. He will travel by their side for some five or six hundred pages, without saying so, without suspecting it; and it is fortunate, besides, if he does not interrupt himself from time to time, in order to throw his stone at them, or to call them innovators or heresiarchs. Here is a public man, who knows everything, and who as soon as he touches upon a Protestant question, puts forth as many errors as words; there is a romancer, and one of the best, who will depict *con amore* a perfectly evangelical Christian, hating superstition, despising vain forms, reading and studying the Bible, rejecting in religion all merely human authority, a perfect Protestant, in fact;—and he will be the last to perceive that he has delineated a Pro-

testant. Protestantism, for the one, consists in the caprices of Henry VIII., or the whimsicalities of Luther; for another, it is the predestinarianism of Calvin; for many, as in the time of Voltaire, it is the funeral pile of Servetus. Lead them from these points, and they understand, they *know* nothing of it, and they have not even the thought that more can and ought to be known of it. And thus it happens that so many people are Protestants without suspecting it; so many people thus continue to march beneath the Roman standard who are no longer Romanists, who have no wish, no possibility of again becoming such.

Among those who attack Christianity, directly or indirectly, there are also few who do not merit, as in the last century, the reproach of mingling form with reality, of not distinguishing, or at least too rarely distinguishing between Catholicism as it is and Christianity as it was. Protestantism, as well as the Christian religion finds itself thus struck by the same blows as its enemy. It is made to bear the blame of faults which it has not committed, errors which it has never ceased to combat. It sees itself in the eyes of many, under the weight of innumerable anti-Christian objections and prejudices, manifestly derived from the abuses of Catholicism. This may be remarked, especially in France, among the population to whom the Protestant colporteurs and evangelists address themselves. They are, in the beginning, always repulsed with horror; then this Catholic surface is scarcely broken through, when below it is manifested far less Catholicism than infidelity. They are not Catholics to be made Protestants, but infidels to be changed into believers.

XXXIX.

REVIVAL OF ENERGETIC EFFORTS AMONG ROMANISTS. A FAVORABLE SIGN.

And this leads us to a concluding reflection.

If there are some who reject Protestantism because they are too Catholic, there are also many who reject it because they are not Catholic enough.

They have accustomed themselves, in fact, not to believe, or at least to believe but little, vaguely, externally, without asking or being asked what they believe. Out of this grows a profound indolence as to examining into religious matters. Religion is, for these people, like an old house, not very comfortable, of which many portions have been abandoned one after another, in order to take up a residence in those which seem to be the least inconvenient,—but which there is no question of quitting, much less of destroying, like Descartes, in order to see if the foundations are good. In spite of its endless forms,—which, besides, can be got rid of at will,—Catholicism is, as to faith, the easiest of all religions. In this respect, nothing is to be done, nothing looked after. You receive your luggage at your birth; you are in nowise responsible for what it does or does not contain. It would require courage to set about making a list of the contents; and this courage is rare in periods of indifference.

It is in this sense that we say that one of the reasons why many do not become Protestants is because they are not sincere enough Catholics. Was it not at the epoch when people were most Catholic, the sixteenth century, that the half of Europe ceased to be so, and that all Europe came very near doing the same? In vain does any one play with words in

representing Protestantism as the liberty to believe *what one chooses*, or to believe nothing if one should prefer. It may by abuse have become this for some; but the best proof that it is not true in reality, is that among those whom it summons to join it, in representing itself as it is, there are only religious men, or men with religious tendencies, who consent to enter it. The indifferent and the infidel do not break with Catholicism.

The state of things is less changed, then, in a hundred years, than would seem at first view. When will it change? God alone knows. But we have seen Protestants rejoice in this point of view, at the movements taking place among actual Catholics, and even at the partial success which they have seemed to meet with. Strong in the recollection of the sixteenth century, they are convinced that the cause of the Reformation has infinitely more to hope for from an epoch even of superstition and bitter zeal, than during the torpor into which Catholicism has been plunged for the first quarter of this century. Its adversaries have seemed to war against a lifeless body. They can no longer make this reproach, but they on their side, will struggle with so much the more confidence because they have but little faith in the new life which seems to inspire their old enemy. They know that no century in reality, has ever been less Catholic, or less fitted to be so. If you awaken a religious life, it can only be, sooner or later, for the advantage of the religion which is most conformed to the true necessities and instincts of the age.

At all events, whatever are to be for Protestantism the results of the present crisis, it must none the less retain the honor of having been the first to proclaim those principles which now overspread the world. It has dictated, since the beginning of the sixteenth century, pages destined to figure in

the nineteenth among the wisest and most beautiful treatises upon the rights of man and the emancipation of nations. It is Protestantism which in 1689 inspired the "*Sighs of enslaved France*," by Jurieu, the best book of its day on the abuses of an absolute monarchy. It is Protestantism which, an hundred years earlier, in the *Franco Gallia* of Hotman, established with as much learning as boldness, the rights of a *States-General*, and the sovereignty of the people. We can well imagine that works of this nature were little calculated to commend the Reformation in the eyes of a Louis XIV. or of a Louis XV.; but at the present day, when the principles of 1789 are more or less articles of faith for every people and every country, it would seem to be high time to render justice to those who have proclaimed them one hundred or two hundred years earlier.

XL.

CONFERENCE OF THE JESUITS AT THE ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE.

After having accompanied the minister to the house of d'Alembert, let us now follow the missionary to the archbishop of Paris. As we have said, it was to him, in spite of the Duke de Choiseul's note, that Bridaine had decided to present himself upon his arrival.

We have also said how the archbishop, without liking the Jesuits, had become their protector.

Conferences frequently took place at his house, between himself and the principal Jesuits of Paris. There were sometimes met together Father Leforestier, provincial of France, Father Desmarêts, the king's confessor, Father de Sacy, former confessor to Madame de Pompadour, Father de Launay, agent of the Canadian missions, Fathers de Montigny, de Neu-

ville, d'Huberlaut, and some others beside, and the Duke de la Vauguyon their principal advocate at court. They discussed the measures to be taken; they arranged the notes to be sent to the Father Centurioni, general of the order, to the Cardinals and to the Pope Clement XIII.; which, however, did not hinder the provincial father from holding besides, unknown to the Archbishop, his own private correspondence with the same personages. When there was time, the other questions of the day were passed in review, for there was not one of them which was not more or less connected with that which more specially occupied them. Politics, sciences, literature itself, all, for the last few months, were concerned in the deadly duel between the Jesuits and their age.

This evening, accordingly, while the encyclopedists met at d'Alembert's, the Jesuits met at the archbishop's. The cabinet of Monsieur de Beaumont had already received a number of them.

The archbishop was at his desk. He was reading a letter which father Leforestier, who was standing beside him, appeared to have just given him.

"It is unheard of," he muttered; "one can scarcely believe one's own eyes. And this piece is authentic?"

"Perfectly authentic, my lord. I have received it from Rome this very day, in cypher, of course. I translated it myself to present to your eminence. The cardinal Spinelli authorized me to show it."

"And the Pope?"

"The Pope is to be supposed not to have seen it."

"He is right," said the archbishop, refolding the paper.

"Pardon, my lord," resumed the father. "These dear brothers do not yet know it. Permit them to read it while awaiting our friends."

"Certainly. Ah! here is Monsieur de Sacy himself. Come

Monsieur de Sacy. You think you know a good deal about Mme. de Pompadour. You do not know all."

"Is it some other affair," said the father, "in which I am mixed up."

"It is the old affair,—but related after her fashion."

"I should like to hear—"

"And related— Come,—guess to whom."

"To another confessor, perhaps."

"No. Higher."

"To you, my lord?"

"No. Higher."

"To the king?"

"Higher, I tell you."

"I do not understand."

"And the pope?"

"The pope! Madame de Pompadour has written to the pope? To himself?"

"To himself. Listen.

"'Ever since the beginning of the year 1752, determined to retain no feeling for the king, but that of gratitude and the purest attachment, I petitioned his majesty to have the doctors of the Sorbonne consulted, and to write to his confessor to have others consulted, in order to find a method of allowing me to remain near him, without exposing me to the suspicion of a weakness which I no longer felt. The king had the doctors consulted, and wrote to Father Pérusseau, who required a total separation. The king replied that he could not consent to this, that I was necessary for the happiness of his life and the prosperity of his affairs; that I was the only person who dared to tell him the truth, so useful to kings. He persisted. The doctors had made replies, according to which it would have been possible to make arrangements, if the Jesuits had agreed to them.

"'Things remained, accordingly, in appearance, as they had been before, until 1755. Long reflection upon the misfortunes which had pursued me, led me to believe that happiness was to be found in God alone. I addressed myself to Father de Sacy, my confessor in my youth, as to a man deeply convinced of this truth. He tried me in secret until the end of January, 1756. At his advice, I wrote a letter to my husband, but my husband refused to see me. Still, according to his advice, for the sake of propriety, and in order that my stay in court might have a motive, I petitioned for a place in the queen's household. He had the staircase which led to my apartment changed, and the king no longer enters save by the common antechamber. Besides this he prescribed to me a rule of conduct, which I strictly followed. This change made a great commotion in the city. Intriguers concerned themselves in it. Father de Sacy was surrounded by them. He declared that he should refuse me the sacraments as long as I remained at court. I recalled to him the promises which he had exacted from me, those which he had made himself, and the difference which intrigue had produced in his feelings. He finished by telling me that the confessor of the late king had been excessively ridiculed, when, after a pretended rupture with Madame de Montespan, the Count de Toulouse came into the world. I had nothing to reply to such a motive, and I saw him no more. The abominable 5th of January* arrived, and was followed by like intrigues. It was wished at all risks, to make me leave the court. The king did his best to persuade Father Desmarèts to allow him to partake of the sacrament. The reply was the same, and the king, who ardently desired to perform his duties as a Christian, was deprived of them.

"'In spite of the extreme patience which I had displayed for

* The attempt of Damiens.

eighteen months with Father de Sacy, my heart was none the less afflicted at my situation. I spoke to a good man, in whom I have confidence; and he, in his turn, spoke of it to one of his friends, an abbé, a man as learned as he is intelligent. They both thought that my conduct was not deserving of the pain I was made to suffer. My new confessor—'"

"She has a confessor!" cried the Father de Sacy. "Does she mention his name?"

"No," said the archbishop; "and I do not know who it can be. To continue: 'My new confessor has put an end to this injustice. He has permitted me to receive the sacraments; and although I am pained by the secrecy which must be observed, in order to shield him from calumny, it is nevertheless a great consolation to my soul.

"'But the king is not able, like me, to commune in secret. His majesty wishes, accordingly, to destroy the opposition with which he meets in approaching the sacraments. The king is troubled at the difficulties with which his confessor has beset him on this point. He is persuaded that the pope, instructed of the facts, will remove, by his advice and authority, the obstacles which hinder him from performing a duty sacred for himself, and edifying for his subjects.'"*

"This confessor puzzles me excessively," repeated Father de Sacy.

"Have you remarked, my fathers," said the archbishop, "the arrangement of this singular composition? For the last ten years, all the efforts of the marquise have been to obtain permission for the king to commune. She feels that this external reconciliation with the church would quiet the king's conscience for an indefinite length of time, and that henceforth

* This letter was found among the papers of the Duke de Choiseul.

there would be no reason for her quitting the court. But she would take care not to commence by that. To believe her, it is she, she alone, who burns to accomplish her religious duties; it is she who, after many years of hope and patience, has at length obtained permission to fulfil them. Gradually, she grows bolder. Will the pope be more inflexible towards the most Christian king, than a simple confessor has been towards a poor sinner? How much art beneath this apparent candor!"

"And yet," said the provincial Father, "in the hands of this woman is our fate!"

"Certain rumors," said another, "were rife to-day—"

"True, perhaps.—and which will be false to-morrow. Shaking her power only makes it stronger. She is never bolder than when she has nearly fallen."

"It is because her stock of hatred has been renewed during her danger."

"Her stock, so far as we are concerned, is always complete, I fancy."

"That," said the archbishop, "is not so true as is generally thought. Those who are brought into close contact with her affirm that she has no hatred for you; which does not hinder her, be it understood, from being quite ready to sacrifice you if she sees her advantage in it. These persons assure me that she understands that Fathers Pérusseau, Desmarèts, de Sacy,—all those, in fact, who have showed themselves severe,—have only done their duty. She declares that she bears them no ill-will. Is this true? We may be allowed to think that her grievances against them influence her, even without her being aware of it, in her feelings towards your order; but if she sacrifices, or allows you to be sacrificed, it will be, I imagine, from entirely different motives. Impress it upon

yourselves well, in the first place, that she is only powerful in all this matter, upon condition of being obedient to the movement organized against you. She may, by encouraging it, do you much harm; by resisting it, she could not save you. The philosophers render her homage because she serves them: let her cease doing so and they would break her like a useless tool. She knows this; she has had proofs of it. Her first motive, accordingly, is fear; her second is vanity. Nothing, according to her friends, is beyond her courage; nothing, according to her enemies, has yet justified the reputation which has been bestowed upon her. She would like to prove to the latter that they are wrong; to the former, that they are right. You are high enough to make your abasement a glorious act."

"A sad consolation, my lord," said one of the Fathers. "One thing is certain, that her intimate friends already compliment her upon it. A certain verse—"

"Let us have it."

"'In the book of fate, on the royal page,
Are writ these words, I 'm sure,—
Agnes from France the English chased,
The Jesuits—Pompadour.'

"A great many others have been made. But, my Fathers—"

"This confessor—this confessor," still repeated Father de Sacy.

He was evidently less shocked at the scandal of the thing, than at his having known nothing of it, and not being able to get at the bottom of it.

"But,—this confessor—stay," said Father de Launay at length. "I think I have it. It occurs to me that the marquise has been occasionally to some village. I do not remember

which, in the diocese of Meaux, on the road to Paris. May not this confessor be the Abbé de Narniers?"

"That is it!" cried the Fathers.

"And that explains, besides," said the archbishop, "why the Abbé de Narniers is going to preach before the king."

XLI.

FATHER DESMARÊTS.

"He will not preach, my lord," interrupted a priest who was ushered in at this moment.

"Father Desmarêts! I thought you were at Versailles."

"I came from there, and I return again this evening. You know the position of things?"

"Certain rumors are afloat—"

"Well founded, my lord. To-morrow, perhaps this evening, Madame de Pompadour will no longer be at the chateau. The king sent for me. I had a long conversation with him. I clearly and positively repeated my conditions. I showed him that in supporting himself upon the pretended innocence of his actual relations with his former mistress, he was trifling with me, with himself, with everybody, and with God especially."

"Good!" said the archbishop, "good!"

"And he finished by yielding. To-morrow, if he keeps his word, I am to confess him. In some days, if he continues to observe the agreement, I permit him to commune."

"Good! good!" repeated the archbishop.

The good Fathers did not appear so perfectly satisfied: uneasiness, at least, was visible beneath their satisfaction.

"It is a hazardous game," said one of them, at length.

"You may succeed—you also may not succeed. And then with what we already have on our hands—"

Desmarêts shook his head.

"My Fathers! my Fathers!" he said, "the time of human calculations is gone by. If I fail we shall be none the worse for it; if I triumph we shall be none the better. The marquise and the duke may hasten our ruin; but neither the duke, nor she, nor the king, nor any one, can hinder it much longer. The king was friendly to us; he is still. What has he done for us?—what can he do? Do you suppose us still at the period when the king was the master? No, no,—he has no longer but to say, like Father La Tour, to whom the councillor-general,* his former pupil, wished to give some advice:

'Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus.'

Our line of conduct at this moment," continued the Father, "should be neither to resist, nor to bend. In bending, we should dishonor ourselves. Let us be what we are, or let us exist no longer. In resisting, we should be none the less broken, and we should be broken forever. Let them say, let them do what they will. If we are to perish, let us perish martyrs. The best means of reviving one day, is for us to remain strangers to the struggles which are to retard or hasten our ruin."

XLII.

POLICY OF THE JESUITS WHEN ATTACKED.

This was, in fact, the system which the order had adopted, particularly in France. The provincial Father had forbidden

* Seguier.

the publication of anything. In presence of so many violent attacks, there must be absolute silence. Was it policy or greatness of soul, calculation or piety? These two motives, generally so mingled in all human actions, have never been more so than in those of the Jesuits. This, in our opinion, is the secret of their history; this is the explanation of all the love and all the hatred of which they have been the objects. Love them, and you will fill volumes with the great and noble things they have done; hate them, and you can fill quite as many with the picture of their ambition, their intrigues, and their loose or absurd instructions. When something is related you of their devotedness, admire, and you will be just; then examine into it, criticize, and you will still be just.

Let us add, that we may continue to be so, in praise and in blame, that we are now speaking, and shall continue to speak, unless notice of the contrary be given, of the Jesuits of former, and not those of our times. In our opinion, the latter merit neither the same sort of criticism, nor above all the same praises. We seek vainly in them that devotedness, that glory which plead the cause of their order a hundred years since. If they themselves attempt to shut the mouths of their adversaries, it is nearly always by appeals to their ancient glory, to their missionaries, to their scholars, their schools, their discoveries of other days. All the good that they still do, they know that others do as well, and would do without them. They see that good itself, when it comes from them, has not the effects which it would have coming from other sources; they feel that the antipathy, just or otherwise, of which they are the objects, does more harm to their church, than all their labors can do of good. It is for this that they take refuge in the past, when they were really the first and most useful servants of the Roman unity; while at the present time, they

feel that they are like troops who are more burdensome than useful, whom their commanders know not how to disband,—they feel that they are superfluous, not only in the age, but in the church. While giving themselves out, from long habit, as the preceptors of the human race, they feel the necessity of asking permission to be so.

We shall return to this subject.

Their immovability, at a time when the attacks against them were redoubled, was accordingly, more or less one of the effects of this continual mingling of religious feeling and earthly views. They were silent because it appeared to them noble, as Christians, to bow their heads beneath oppression; they were silent also,—perhaps we should say *especially*,—because they no longer hoped to gain anything by speaking, and because the greatest injury which at this juncture they were able to inflict upon their enemies, was to put upon them all the odium of being the persecutors.

But neither of these motives was of a nature to be at that time comprehended. The age was neither pious enough to imagine men keeping silence from resignation, nor impartial enough to understand that their silence was to be in the end an argument against their judges. From it was simply concluded,—and it is certain that their history authorized this distrust,—that if they were silent in public they were only the more active in secret. Calculations were made with a sort of terror, in regard to what they could not fail to be plotting in the dark. In marching on to the assault, none doubted but what they were walking upon an undermined soil, and this feeling tended to augment the ardor of some, the fear of others, and the hatred of all.

It appears, notwithstanding, that the watchword was religiously enough obeyed. We cannot know what passed in the

shadow of the confessional, and we feel besides, that the Jesuits were at perfect liberty to make recruits wherever they could; but as to intrigues, in the proper sense of the word, we cannot accuse them of any, from the moment when they perceived themselves seriously threatened. Besides, what would they have hoped from these? Everything was brought to light. They had enemies everywhere, they were everywhere watched. Simple prudence, as well as the motives of which we have spoken, commanded them to remain spectators. Prosperity degraded them; they wished to be grand in their fall.

XLIII.

LETTER FROM LAURENT KAULEN.

"You are in fact," resumed the archbishop, "in a very critical and solemn situation. A noble part is offered you; so noble, my fathers, that what I ask for you from God is, not the courage to accept it, for that you will have, but the power to accept it without pride. In this respect, your brethren of Portugal set you a beautiful example. You will assuredly, in France, not be called upon to submit to such treatment as that by which they are crushed. It will in consequence be easier for you to be courageous, easier to be martyrs. Take care! Take care! A martyr's pride is like any other pride; and I need not teach you how God detests pride. It is beautiful to know how to suffer, but it is beautiful only; it is more than beautiful to suffer without pride,—it is Christian. Listen to what is written from the horrors of a dungeon, by one of these men upon whom the Marquis de Pombul has exhausted his despotism. It is Father Kaulen writing to the provincial of the Bas-Rhin.

"'——— Seized by soldiers, who sword in hand, conducted me to a fort, I was thrown into a dungeon in which the rats disputed with me for my very food, for the darkness prevented my driving them away. We were twenty. The first few days we were treated with some attention; afterwards, scarce enough was given us to hinder our dying of hunger. Our breviaries were taken from us; they even wished to take away our crucifixes one day. One of us could not endure their violence; he died.

"'Shortly after we were transferred to the prisons of Lisbon, and from thence to the fort of St. Julien upon the sea shore. In this fort, our prison is yet more horrible than the other. It is a subterranean dungeon, obscure, infected, into which light is admitted only by an aperture three hands in height, and three fingers wide. They give us a little oil for a lamp, half a pound of bread, and water often tainted. The damp trickles down the walls. "All grows putrid here," said the governor of the fort one day; "it is only the Jesuits who keep."

"'And in fact, we appear to be kept by a miracle, in order to suffer for the sake of Christ. And yet some die from time to time. We envy their lot, not because they are at the end of their labors, but because they have obtained the palm.

"'Those of our Fathers who were at Macao, of whom some have already with courage endured torments and prison among the infidels, have also been brought hither. It has been more, it seems, in accordance with God's will for them to suffer in this country, without having deserved it, than to die for their faith among the idolators. His will be done.

"'We have only to declare that we abjure the society, in order to be free. This has been told us from the beginning; it is repeated to us every day, with threats of increasing our

tortures. Thanks be to God, none have yet yielded, nor will yield, I hope.*

"'Pray for us dear brethren, but not as for men who are to be pitied. We feel that God is with us. We would not change places with you.

"'LAURENT KAULEN, *captive for Jesus Christ.*'"

"Pray for him!" cried Father de Lannay. "It is he that should pray for us. A martyr—a saint."

"Yes," cried the Father de Sacy, "he will one day be one of the patron saints of our society!"

The archbishop slightly shrugged his shoulders. "Incurable!" he murmured.

The good Fathers did not admire. They calculated the lustre and profit which would be gained them by another saint.

XLIV.

FATHER BRIDAINE'S CENSURE.

Whilst they were looking at the letter, the door opened, and was shut again immediately. The movement had been heard of a man drawing back hastily, and a voice saying, "It is a mistake."

"What is it?" asked the prelate.

"But, my lord," said one of the Fathers, "I thought I saw —I do not know—Father Bridaine."

It was he. Entering the house with the air of a man who knows himself to be expected, he had been shown directly to the cabinet of the archbishop.

* And in fact none of them yielded. Six years afterwards the cells of St. Julien still imprisoned an hundred of them.

"Father Bridaine!" was the exclamation.

The surprise, to judge from their air, was none of the most agreeable. Monsieur de Beaumont appeared to reflect for an instant; then he went and opened the door.

"Come in," he said, "come in, my Father. Mistake or not, you are welcome."

"My lord, this costume—"

He showed his leathern gaiters. His cassock was whitened with dust.

"This costume!" said the archbishop. "Well, my Father, it is yours. The apostle of our country should be seen as he is.—

> 'Sunt quos curriculo pulverem olympicum
> Collegisse juvat'—

as our Horace has it. Is not your dust worth as much as this other?"

"My lord—"

"But you are perhaps very much fatigued—"

"No, my lord. I only came from Meaux, and I have taken the whole day to it."

"Sit down."

And the archbishop conducting him to a seat, said in a low tone:

"You received my note?"

"Yes."

"You have seen no one?"

"No one. But the duke wrote to me also. He wished to see me first."

"Ah!"

"My Fathers," resumed the archbishop aloud, "since accident has caused Father Bridaine to meet you here, I will not

conceal from you, that it is partly at my request that he has come to Paris. His knowledge, his experience, his personal authority—"

"My lord deceives himself, I think, my Fathers, in regard to the use I may be to you. I should have, it is true, many things to say to you; but these—"

"Go on," said the archbishop.

"It would be much easier, my Fathers, to tell you these things, if I saw you successful and powerful, than in presence of the evils which threaten you. Many of you, besides, know already what I think and what I have always thought. Father Leforestier, Father de Sacy, Father—"

As he sought while speaking, other faces known to him, his eyes fell upon one, the sight of which appeared to impress him painfully.

"—Father Charnay," he continued.

It was, in fact, he of whose exploits in the Cevennes we have heard. Bridaine named one or two besides, repeating that they had already had occasion to know his whole opinion on the subject of their order.

"But since then," said the archbishop, "the face of things has changed. Portugal has given a signal which may be repeated from one end of Europe to the other. The cause of the society is compromised in Spain, in France, even in Italy, perhaps at Rome, for they will finish, without doubt, by demanding the abolition of the order, and the Holy See might not be in a condition to refuse it. Never has a more tremendous storm—"

"My lord," said the missionary, "this is an important process, which may last for centuries in this world, and will never be closed save at the judgment bar of God. It is before God, accordingly, rather than before man, and according to the ordi-

nary rules of human justice, that you should judge yourselves, you, my Fathers, and your order.

"You pass in review the accusations, the calumnies, which are spread abroad against you, you cry out against their injustice, prejudice, and cruelty. Humanly speaking, you are a hundred times right. Among the grievances which are brought up, there are but very few which are not imaginary, and of which an impartial Catholic could seriously accuse you. And he would still be very far from seeing enough in those to justify the dissolution of an order, and the proscription of fifteen or twenty thousand ecclesiastics.

"But if we have the right to call iniquitous, humanly speaking, every punishment disproportioned to an offence, still more any punishment based upon false or even exaggerated accusations, God, who looks upon things from on high, may perceive justice where we discern nothing but injustice. When He is represented to us in the Scripture, as chastening a people by the hand of a conqueror, this people is certainly innocent in relation to those who overthrow it. The instrument of the chastisement is accordingly unjust; the chastisement itself is not so.

"God forbid, my fathers, that I should wish to apply to your present situation so severe and so absolute a reflection. All that I wish to say is, that the evident injustice of the condemnation, with which all are preparing to strike you, either here or elsewhere, ought not to be sufficient to prove to yourselves your innocence. Because the impious hate you, you cannot logically conclude that God loves you; it would not be the first time, I repeat, that He would have remitted to the wicked the execution of his wise decrees. I do not judge you; I only allow myself to indicate what you in your judgment should not lose sight of."

XLV.

PLAIN SPEAKING.

Accustomed only to hear ardent apologies or bitter abuse, the Fathers listened in respectful surprise to this appeal to higher ideas. They felt themselves put upon ground where they could without anger hear themselves criticised, and without pride commended. They were all attention, but Bridaine had done.

"Go on," said the archbishop.

"No, my lord, no details. I have said that I left the cause to God, and to the conscience of our Fathers. I have no judgment to pronounce."

"And if we ourselves beg you to do so?" said Father de Lannay.

"Yes, we ourselves,—" said the others.

"If you desire me?—Well, God be my aid! Here is my whole opinion.

"There are two things, in the first place, which you will have the goodness not to forget, for I should be obliged to repeat them before and after each of my observations.

"The first is, that I render full justice to what you have done for the good and the honor of religion. No one admires more than myself your missionaries and your scholars. There have been, and there are among you, men, whose zeal, faith, and enlightenment, I should be rejoiced to possess.

"The second is, that no tie, no sympathy attaches me to your enemies. I share in none of the prejudices which have risen up against you, and as to the grievances in detail which I have considered well founded, I have always in my mind

kept them distinct from the exaggerations and falsehoods which have been mingled with them.

"This settled, I ask myself whether there are not other grievances, difficult to designate, but nevertheless tangible enough to disturb in time the most upright consciences, and to plead against you in the sight of God.

"God, says the Scripture, is a *jealous* God. 'He will have no other gods before Him.' It is His first commandment.

"Now when we have to preach on this subject, we never fail to say, and with entire justice, that there are many ways of being idolatrous; that money for the miser, glory for the ambitious man, pleasure for one, power for another, are in reality '*gods before God.*'

"Well, *your* God is your society. It is not so, certainly, in the sense that you deny God for it; but if you serve God it is more for the sake of your society than for God's sake. There were of old temples dedicated to the Roman people, *populo Romano;* if you were not Christians, if your faith permitted you to build to more than one God, the society of Jesus would have an altar beside that of Jesus, as the people of Mars built one to itself by the side of the one to Mars. One of your Fathers, whom I was called upon to attend upon his death-bed, was so struck with this idea, that it embittered his last moments. And yet it was not without difficulty that I had brought him to perceive it. I had found the society and God so mingled, so identified in his heart, that he was a long time without even understanding me; but his conscience once alarmed, he was so wretched that he despaired of his salvation, and I knew not how to close the wound I had made. He could not recall one single one of his actions,—and yet his career had been very long, and very full,—without perceiving with terror, that this action had been performed as much, often more for the society,

than for God, for the earth than for heaven. He saw the Supreme Judge take away all that was not for holy ends, and he trembled lest after this partition nothing, or almost nothing, would remain.

"This partition which God will surely make, make it now, my Fathers, if not for each one of you, at least, since we are speaking of your society, for her and her works. Behold her referring all to herself, her interests, spiritual or not, her power, her glory; behold her presenting herself to her members as their mother, their country, their church, their God, their all. And tell me, whether that, that alone does not deserve the indignation of Him who will have 'no other gods before Him!'

"From this fundamental vice proceed all those which may have contributed to take from you His love, and, at the same time, the respect and affection of men. Your institution has served religion, but less as a subordinate executing the orders of his master, than as a minister reigning in the name of an indolent prince, and giving himself, if not all the honors, at least all the rights of the highest supremacy. It is not for me to examine if you have always made good use of these rights. I take only the spirit; I say, that in this point of view, if you had only ordered excellent things to be done in the name of religion, still there would be usurpation on your part. You have not reigned in God's name, but in God's place. What, accordingly, has resulted? That the divinest laws promulgated by you, have in the eyes of many persons become human, arbitrary, humiliating commandments. These persons have doubtless been wrong to give themselves up to this impression. They should have examined thoroughly; they would have found, I will not say always, but almost always, God's law beneath yours. But in the meantime, externally, it was with yours, and yours alone, that they found themselves

brought into contact; it was to your will, to your yoke that they found themselves bowed. This idea, made use of by some, and greedily received by all those upon whom the yoke of religion weighed heavily,—this idea has powerfully contributed to shake the empire of religion. God, if I dare speak thus, sees himself dethroned with you, like those sovereigns who fall victims to the hatred sworn against their ministers. This universal revolt against faith, morals, and all that is most holy, you it is who in many respects, have provoked it.

"I said 'morals,' and there might be more than one observation made upon this subject. I shall not go to search in your books to see if it be correct or not to say that you authorize lying, theft, adultery. I believe on the one hand, that you have had more than one unscrupulous doctor, whose maxims, in the common course of life, would strangely modify all that has until now been designated as vice or virtue; I believe, on the other, that it would be neither reasonable nor just to present these aberrations as your habitual and constant rules. The case, in this form, may give room to very different opinions; but it may be reduced to one simple observation, in regard to which, I think all must agree. Whether or not you may be accused of corrupting morality, you have degraded it; whether or not you have lost sight of the principles upon which Jesus Christ laid its foundations, you have drowned them in the infinite detail of your precepts. By dint of analyzing virtues, and above all vices, you have established between good and bad, a multitude of *shades*, of which I know many exist in the human heart, but which theoretically presented, cannot fail to deprive moral laws of that absolute and evidently imperative character which they have in the conscience and in the gospel. There, man appears to me bound to his duty, if I may thus speak, by two or three cords at most,

but strong and properly stretched, holding on the one hand to what is most solid without him, and on the other to what is most profound and vital within. You have not cut these cords, but you have untwisted them, in order to take one by one all the fibres of which they were composed, and it is with these fibres, infinitely multiplied, that you have pretended to bring man to virtue and to God. From thence proceed two contrary but equally unhappy results. If man submit he is straightened in all his movements; he goes to heaven, but like a mummy enwrapped in bandages. If he resist, the fibres break and nothing binds him any longer to faith nor morality. Another point of view, consequently, under which the present demoralization is in part your work. You have substituted petty precepts for great principles; a heap of sand for a dyke of rock. The waves have come, the sand has been swept away.

"If, then, as all predict, as you yourselves appear no longer to doubt.—if, I say, you are the first to be submerged in this tempest, what counsel can I give you, dear brethren, if it be not to accept this trial in a Christian spirit, and to make every effort to draw good results from it? God knows, as we know, and better than we do, that demoralization will go on increasing; He knows that in allowing your overthrow He only opens another door to the desecration of His temple. On the part of a man, a prince, it would be folly to leave his citadel defenceless in order to punish some of the soldiers who guard it; but God in certain moments stays not at details. When we count by days, He counts by centuries. If He overthrows, or allows to be overthrown, He has all eternity in which to re-build. What matter to Him if His temple be defended by one or another? Let us cease, pygmies as we are—let us cease to imagine to ourselves that we are necessary to Him.

He has but to will, in order to have soldiers. 'From the stones themselves,' said Jesus Christ, 'He can raise up children to Abraham.' And if the sanctuary be a moment invaded,—once more, what matters it to Him? He knows that He could scatter the impious with a breath. He wished to chastise the age, and behold He has commenced with you!"

XLVI.

JESUIT MORALITY.

When Bridaine ceased, there was a long silence. Some of his hearers seemed but little to relish his words; some others seemed to be making an effort to understand them. No one, however, had interrupted him; their consciences secretly agreed with him. If he had been mistaken in some points, there still remained three great reproaches which they did not dream of refuting:

They had deified their society by a sort of worship;

They had put themselves in the sight of men, in the place of God;

They had by dint of detailing its laws deprived morality of all grandeur and vigor.

Of these, no enlightened, sincere, pious Catholic if he reflected, could refrain from accusing the Jesuits. Bridaine had summed up the opinion of this class, not very numerous, it is true, but truly honorable, which has always experienced for them from Christian motives, the same aversion as others from impiety. The position of these Catholics is necessarily very delicate. When they see so many bad passions in play against the Jesuits, their conscience tells them to take the defence; and scarcely have they opened their lips before they

are accused of being sold to them. The Jesuits, on their side, very unscrupulously take possession of whoever takes up, or appears to take up their defence. Say one word in their favor, and you behold yourself inscribed in large characters, in the long catalogue of their apologists; but endeavor to return to this word, and to explain how you did not mean to absolve them from all blame, you find yourself rejected with disdain, and confounded in their eyes with the bitterest of their adversaries.

And this Bridaine had often experienced. In recalling the fact that several of the Jesuits assembled at the archbishop's already knew his opinion in regard to their order, he might have related the annoyances which his frankness had often cost him; and when he resigned himself, at their request, to tell them once more what he thought of their situation, he well knew to what he exposed himself. From a natural consequence of the first of the three faults mentioned, the troubling a Jesuit in the worship he has vowed to his order, is wounding him in his dearest feelings; it is in his eyes what to a simple believer would be criticisms of God himself.

And yet if charity and prudence had permitted him to say all; if, above all, as a Catholic and priest he had not been obliged on more than one point to repress the impulse of his indignant conscience, what could he not have added!

He could have shown that this worship given by them to their order had become for many, their only religion.

He could have depicted this empire which they exercised in the name of God, adopting, wherever it was possible, the form of the boldest, most complete, most brutal despotism.

And, finally, those moralists whom he had only blamed as weakening moral laws, by dint of analyzing them, he could have shown them searching out vice in its most ignoble

abysses, and publishing—always *Ad majorem Dei gloriam**—books which one dares not mention.

And he could repeat, at the present day, that which he could have said in 1760; he could even say it on many points with still more justice, and that not only of the Jesuits, but of a great majority of the clergy.

The Jesuits fell; the Jesuits have risen again. Such as they were, they are still,—less, as we have said, less the brilliant talent, the solid learning, and the varnish of good taste with which they covered their boldness and their errors. Never have they more openly endeavored to absorb all that is for them, to crush all that is against them. Their means alone have changed. Of old, they reigned through the king; now, they reign through the people. They commanded in the name of despotism; now, in the name of liberty. All hostile clamor was stifled by the gag; now, by crying out louder than those who clamor. So long as they could use the stake and the scaffold, they did so; now that they can do so no longer, they range themselves on the side of tolerance, ready to recommence as soon as they can. But one thing which has not changed, which has continued its shameful and fatal march through all their revolutions, is their old propensity for rummaging in the foulest folds of the human heart. They, who make celibacy an absolute, indispensable condition of sacerdotal purity, pass their lives in meditating upon all that celibacy was primitively destined, one would think, to banish from the imagination and the heart! All the turpitudes which the generality of the impure cull, in passing through the vast field of vice, they analyze, they label; they give names to what had no name, even in the orgies of imperial Rome, and this hideous

* Their usual device. They placed it (A. D. M. G.) on the title-pages of all their works.

science continues to perfect itself from day to day. Even those whom you may know to be the purest, the holiest in their conduct, the most seriously enemies of evil, you may be sure that a debauchee has nothing to teach them, and has not fed more than they have upon impure ideas and meditations.

But why this indignation? Listen to them. The physician of the body is not infected by the ulcers which he sees. Why, then, should the physician of souls, the confessor, be more so by the turpitudes which he analyzes? It is, after all, for the salvation of his brethren that he gives himself up to these revolting studies! And thus it is that they succeed in making themselves a conscience, which has nothing, or scarcely anything, in common with that which good people have called by this name for nearly six thousand years. Fed upon these impurities, the heart has gradually lost, even while remaining pure, all the candor of innocence. After having unscrupulously explored this portion of the kingdom of evil, they become less scrupulous about venturing into others. As they have trifled with impurity, they will trifle with lying, with fraud. Not only will they multiply, in theory, those shades which facilitate the passage from good to evil, from the true to the false, but they will violate themselves, almost without knowing it, the commonest rules of honesty. They will profess, sometimes openly in their books, sometimes more quietly in the confessional, sometimes intentionally, sometimes without even suspecting it, but always, everywhere, in everything, that the means are justified by the end. They will calumniate men and things; they will cut short quotations; they will falsify history; they will impudently deny things which the most zealous defenders of Catholicism have until then admitted; they will laugh at the most formal and crushing contradictions, provided they do not reach the ears of those whom they have

deceived. They will have, for educated people, a cool, reasoned, reasonable Catholicism,—a vague philosophy, of which the infidels themselves would accept three-fourths;—and, at the same time, for the unlearned, a religion, a worship rather,—for there is question but of forms,—a worship entirely material, an incoherent collection of words and observances. For the first, grand sermons on morality; for the second, legends, miraculous medals. Thus they will lie to those, in giving them as Catholicism that which neither councils nor popes have ever recognized as such; to the others, in imposing on them, under the name of Christianity, all that a thousand years of decadence has added of grossness to Christianity.

But to return to the Jesuits and Bridaine.

XLVII.

STARTLING PROPOSAL.

The situation was becoming embarrassing; Monsieur de Beaumont put an end to it by rising. Archbishop as he was, or rather because he was archbishop, he had appearances to preserve. When he lectured the Jesuits, which sometimes happened, he did so in general terms; and though he might approve of all that he had just heard, he did not wish to be forced distinctly to pronounce his approbation.

They conversed a few moments as they stood, but on indifferent subjects. Finally, the archbishop and Bridaine remained alone.

"Did I go too far?" asked Bridaine.

"No indeed, I can assure you. But too much or too little, it cannot make much difference. They will not heed. 'Those

whom Jupiter wishes to destroy, he first blinds,' said the ancients."

"At any rate, they cannot fancy that I have any interest in blaming them."

"Do you think so?"

And M. de Beaumont smiled. Bridaine looked at him with astonishment.

"I do not understand you, my lord."

"Do you think so?" repeated the archbishop. "In a few days, perhaps to-morrow, they will fancy they have proof that you are their most mortal enemy."

"Proof! What proof?"

"Do you know why the Duke de Choiseul was in such haste to see you?"

"No indeed."

"He wishes to propose to you the situation—well! what now? What is the matter?"

Scarcely seated in the arm-chair which the archbishop had presented him, Bridaine had sprung up suddenly, breathless and excited; then he stood immovable, his gaze fixed, his arms half raised to heaven. Finally, as if he had entirely forgotten where he was, he began to stride up and down the room, with trembling lips, but the same stony gaze.

He had guessed.

"Confessor to the king!" he murmured. "I! Confessor to the king! Good God!"

For at this period, no one had a head so strong, or a heart so pure,—no, not even a Bridaine, nor a saint,—as to be able to look with indifference upon the distinction conferred by this title. To see the king of France at his feet!—to be able to say, "My son," to the eldest son of the church!—to have a knowledge of his most secret thoughts!—was not this, if not

in the brilliancy, at least in the reality of its power, the first ecclesiastical post in the kingdom?

It is true that since Louis XV. had allowed his passions to rule him without restraint, this situation had become a sad sinecure. For the last few years, the connection between Father Desmarêts and his most august and hardened penitent had been confined to a few insignificant conversations, which, moreover, generally came to an abrupt termination, because the king obstinately refused to promise any essential amendment. But it might happen any day that the confessor of the king might find himself called upon to exercise to its full extent this momentarily suspended power. But even as it now was, the Jesuits attached immense importance to it. Louis XV., even during the worst of his immoralities still retained the religious instincts of his youth. It was well known that he was seriously annoyed at finding himself at war with the church. This annoyance, as yet powerless against his vices, might cause him suddenly to throw himself into the arms of his religion,—that is, of his confessor,—for to him the highest hope, the most elevated object of religion, was the reconciling himself to the church by partaking of the sacraments. The longer he struggled, the more reason was there to think that if he were once conquered, he would give himself up body and soul to his conqueror.

Bridaine had never made this calculation; and if he had ever done so, it would not have been on his own account; for there was probably not a priest in France who had less dreamed of becoming the king's confessor than himself. But the prospect was none the less brilliant, particularly under such circumstances. This post now about to be offered to him, had nearly always been in the hands of the Jesuits. In this change of persons would be effected a whole revolution:

the new confessor would be forced to take a part, and a very prominent one, in the struggle going on between the parliament and the society of Jesuits. Accordingly Bridaine experienced an exceedingly confused mixture of joy and vexation, confidence and terror.

"Yes," resumed the archbishop, at length perceiving that he had become more composed, "the duke de Choiseul intends to have Desmarêt's situation given you. Until now there are but three or four persons in the secret, and Desmarêts is not one of these. Monsieur de Choiseul does not know that I am aware of it."

"But what is his object?"

"It is this: he wanted a man who was known to be the adversary, but not the enemy of the Jesuits; for the king would never consent to have a confessor who had shown bitterness against them. He wanted, moreover, a priest tried by long labors, the object of general consideration; in a word, one worthy in the eyes of all parties of the eminent post which he must occupy. He considers himself as having found this priest—"

"My lord—"

"—— and he is not mistaken."

"But," said Bridaine, "would not the sole fact of my presence at court make me the auxiliary of those who summon me thither from hatred of the Jesuits, or of religion, which for many is the same thing?"

"I have no doubt that this is their intention. It is even very probable that one of the reasons for selecting you is that you are unaccustomed to court life; and thus they hoped to find you a tolerably manageable instrument, since you would suspect no management. Ought you to refuse on that account? I think not. It depends upon yourself alone promptly to baffle

all the evil designs in which you may already be entangled. Be independent, be yourself; you can only gain by it. The king must have all confidence in you, upon seeing you the enemy of all plotters, even of those who made you known to him."

"Confidence, perhaps; but his immoralities? You must know well that I could never consent to remain their passive spectator. Either the marquise must leave, or I myself will—"

"The marquise? What! do you not know? She is in disgrace."

"Since when?"

"A very short time; but Desmarêts told us. Courage, my Father! You see that the way is open. Courage! Perhaps you are summoned to save France."

Bridaine shook his head.

"To save France, my lord! The days of miracles are past. If I save the king it will be wonderful. Shall I be able to do so? God alone knows. Besides, I am not yet there. The duke is not going to nominate me without fixing his conditions. Will they be such as I can accept?"

"Here they are, perhaps," said the archbishop, handing him a note just brought in by a valet.

"From the duke!" he cried. "Let us see.

"'Father Bridaine will have the goodness to get into the carriage which I have the honor to send for him, and which will conduct him to my hotel. I await him.

"'Choiseul.'"

"He knows then that I am here?" resumed Bridaine.

"Spies are not wanting in Paris. You must have been followed. So much the better after all. Since you have a treaty to make with him, here is the foundation laid."

"How so?"

"He wrote you word to see no one before you went to him; you obeyed by coming here. It was the best way of letting him know that you do not intend to be at his orders."

"The note is consequently somewhat laconic."

"Yes; a little like a *lettre de cachet*. Here you are almost in disgrace before you have come into favor, my dear Father. But do not be uneasy. They have need of you. In the meantime you are forwarned; that was all I wished. We will talk more of it another time, unless indeed you should wish to carry out the rebellion, and not go to see him until to-morrow."

"I have half a mind—"

"No. All things considered, no bravado. For a man like him, it is a great deal you may be sure, to have sent for you. Go to him."

"Your benediction, my lord, upon my arrival."

"Take it, my Father, and perhaps your arrival will be a blessing to us."

"We will pray for it, my lord, but let us hope nothing."

XLVIII.

PETTY MOTIVES FOR GREAT CHANGES.

One must have lived at the court of Louis XIV. or Louis XV., to be able fully to appreciate how the importance of affairs varied according to the private interests staked, or the people concerned in them, or the turn which the most insignificant details took, or seemed to take. To the people, there is no more humiliating characteristic of an absolute government than that they are forced to perceive their highest inter-

ests linked to the fate of these petty things; and that they must consider themselves fortunate if there is at least *equality* of interest,—if these petty things do not in high places alone attract attention.

This fact is never more prominent than during periods of decline. In this universal belittling of all minds, great questions only become important in becoming, as it were, *belittled.* In order that the government should concern itself about them, it was necessary that they should become mixed up with all kinds of petty interests,—necessary that they should pass from principles to details, from things to persons.

And, accordingly, it was only after the overthrow of Desmarêts was talked of, that the affairs of the Jesuits so entirely occupied the court. The business had descended to the proportions of an intrigue, and the people who managed the king found themselves once more in their element. Incapable of taking in the question as a whole, they were charmed to see it presented to them in one of its mildest aspects. It was no longer necessary to declare war against the Jesuits; a trick must be played them, and there have always been people disposed to be prouder of a trick well played, than of a battle gained.

The Duke de Choiseul, in spite of his superiority to many others, was no genius. Broad views, largely conceived and nobly-executed projects were in nowise his forte. All that can be said is that he contrived to conceal this better than most statesmen of his day. This gave him a certain air of grandeur, which his courtiers and he himself took for real greatness, but to which history soon gave its due. Few ministers, in reality, have ever lived more blindly from day to day; few have ever been more wanting in principles, or have allowed themselves to be so guided, not only by events, but by the

slightest fluctuations of opinion. He appeared to be in advance of his age, but was merely pushed forward by it.

In this case, particularly, what was his object in exposing the Jesuits to the enmity of the parliament? What could it be? The more we examine the history of this particular crisis, the more we are at a loss to understand his aim. He was not pious enough to wish their fall from love to religion, nor *philosopher* enough to desire it for the benefit of infidelity; nor was he liberal enough to aid in it for the sake of the freedom of the people and the progress of liberal ideas. On the contrary, everything would appear to indicate that he had not even formed an exact idea of the results to which the event might lead in these three points of view, the only truly important ones. His great object, his only thought, was like that of the marquise, to disarm opposition and remain in place. Moreover, the question as a whole was above his capacity; it was necessary that he should take it in one of its details, which would absolve him from the necessity of attacking principles.

XLIX.

A PRIME MINISTER.

He had, accordingly, by means of his confidants, set afloat the idea of changing the confessor. If the enterprise fail, the responsibility of it will fall upon the subalterns alone; if it succeed, he will allow the honor to be given to him. If the new confessor be favorable to Madame de Pompadour, she will be grateful for it, and the minister will be assured of her support; if the new confessor cause her downfall, the minister will reign alone. At all events, he will have avoided pronouncing against the Jesuits. If they come off conquerors they

cannot boast of having conquered him; if they are overthrown, it will be the king himself, their friend, who will have abandoned them, and there will accordingly no longer be any reason for keeping up appearances.

However, it was only by deceiving the king as to the consequences of this act, that his consent to it could possibly be gained. To acknowledge to him, or even to let him perceive the results which they hoped to draw from it against the Jesuits, would have been to labor for them. It was necessary to make him look upon it as a mere change of person not of system, and the Duke de Choiseul, aided by the marquise, had for some time been working with this object in view.

The duke had in consequence been much annoyed at the last conferences of the king with Father Desmarêts. Either they would come to an understanding,—and then how was a new confessor to be proposed.—or they would not come to an understanding, and then the king before changing would wish to be certain of finding the other more conciliating. And could an honorable confessor be found who would promise to be more accommodating than Desmarêts?

The latter was evidently gaining ground, so that the minister had contrived not to be at Versailles at the moment when the disgrace of the marquise should be announced. He did not wish to be suspected of being there with any particular object, nor did he wish to be obliged to offer consolation or aid which would have been promises. He had until now been so united with her, that unless he took great care, the fall might carry him down also.

Accordingly, for two days he had remained in Paris, but he knew the course of events at Versailles hour by hour, and had been the first to learn, what toward the afternoon had become a general rumor, that the marquise was about to be dismissed.

It was the same day upon which he had appointed a meeting with Father Bridaine, that so great a change had taken place in the affairs in which he was to be concerned. His first thought had been to tell him that for the present there was nothing to be done; but upon reflection he found that affairs were in a more promising position than he had at first imagined. If, on the one hand, the exile of the favorite appeared for awhile to strengthen Desmarèts in his post, this same event, on the other, destroyed one of the greatest obstacles which the minister had yet perceived. It was now no longer necessary to seek a less severe confessor. The king would now no longer fear seeming to change with the sole object of having one more conciliating; it was even possible, if he appeared a little inclined to abandon his irregularities, to induce him to quit the Jesuit as too indulgent, and to recommend the other for his very austerity. Thus, after having nearly given up the idea of making this offer to Bridaine, Choiseul had returned to his determination of doing it as soon as possible. He knew besides, that the affair had become known, and was tolerably certain that the archbishop would be one of the first informed of it.

L.

WARRING ELEMENTS.

There was a reception at his hôtel on this same evening. It was Wednesday, the usual day for the soirées of the duchess. He had been very glad of this pretext for absenting himself from Versailles, a thing which he rarely did two days in succession.

The saloon of Madame de Choiseul was open to all the good society of Paris. But at this epoch, good society was becom-

ing a very different thing from that originally so designated. Aristocracy of wealth walked boldly beside aristocracy of birth. The space still left between them by social position, was filled up by corruption,—for vice as well as virtue may constitute an equality. By the side of these two was growing up another, an aristocracy of literature, to which the two first, partly from taste, but chiefly from necessity, had begun openly to pay their court. The authors, with some few exceptions, were still very polite to the old escutcheons and the long purses; but this politeness began to assume a tolerably patronizing air. The time was felt to be approaching when a well-made pen should take precedence of the heaviest sword that ever descended from one generation to another, from the bluff warrior of Charlemagne to a duke or peer of the Œil-de-Bœuf.

And accordingly, good society was the confused mingling of nobles who began to disbelieve in their own nobility, financiers ceasing to look upon themselves as inferior to any one, and writers practising the management of their sceptre, throwing themselves headlong into the future opened to them by the weakness of some, the insignificance of others, and the depravity of all. Although the latter party were, as usual, divided into a number of coteries, they did not even need to lay aside their internal dissensions in order upon the least alarm to find themselves in a compact phalanx which defied the blunted weapons of the old régime.

This phalanx had its fields for manœuvreing,—the saloons,—and there were few where it exhibited itself more at its ease than in that of Madame de Choiseul. Nowhere could the Diogenes of the day more freely jostle with their tubs the strong boxes of the financiers, the swords of the chevaliers, the laces of the ladies, and the crosses of the clergy.

This equality was, in reality, not the effect of the morals of the age alone, nor of the liberal instincts of the mistress of the house. It entered into the policy of the minister. Besides the popularity which it gained him with the literary and financial men, he managed by this means to tutor the nobility without lessening their dignity,—which he would have been reluctant to do,—and without, like Richelieu, crushing them, which was indeed no longer possible. Now he rightly looked upon the humiliation of the nobility as one of the necessities of the day, as one of the future conditions of all governments which would wish to be founded upon possibility and not play too hazardous a game. It is little probable that he took into consideration all the consequences of this revolution; or perhaps we should speak more correctly in saying that he only looked upon it as a means of strengthening and assuring his power. But at all events, it was one way of understanding his age; and when we remember how many people did not understand it at all, and died without doing so, or only opened their eyes to its meaning upon the scaffold, we are almost tempted to praise him for having gone even so far as he did.

LI.

SOIRÉE AT THE MINISTER'S HOTEL.—THE ABBÉ.

The assemblage of guests this evening was neither numerous nor brilliant; it was a mere summer assembly, many of the frequenters of the house being absent at their country places, and the remainder being inclined to prefer a garden, even a public garden, to a heated saloon. Moreover, many had set off for Versailles whilst the duke was returning to Paris; they wished to be nearer the fountain-head of news,

and to be present if possible, at some of the scenes of the drama or comedy which was known to be enacting by the king, the marquise and her confessor. There were great numbers of literary men,—they, for good reasons, being little accustomed to retire to their estates in the summer,—only those whom we know to be supping with d'Alembert were absent. Their absence had been remarked. The duke had wondered, not without uneasiness, whether these gentlemen were already including him in the disgrace of Madame de Pompadour.

He was known to be too closely connected with her, and his fortunes to be too closely associated with hers, for any one to venture upon asking him how matters stood. Although everybody knew about as much of the affair as he did, he was supposed to be better informed than the rest, and his air of anxiety confirmed this idea. It was in vain that the duchess exerted herself to the utmost,—it was found impossible to establish a general conversation. There was no vivacity save in the corners, where people retired to chat, and to watch closely every movement of the minister. The newly-arrived guests were scarcely allowed time to salute the duchess, before they were inveigled into these corners to be overwhelmed with questions, and he who of all others had the most questions to ask, and dared not ask them, was the minister himself.

It was about ten o'clock, when a name suddenly announced by the usher, attracted all eyes to the door.

The new comer was an abbé of middle height, deformed and almost humpbacked; his countenance was very ugly, but its whole expression was, in spite of this, so *spirituelle*, so animated, that the deformity of his figure was forgotten in the sparkling of his eyes.

"Ah! Good evening! Monsieur de Chauvelin," said the

minister extending his hand. "Who imagined that you were in Paris?"

"Why—you in the first place, I should think—"

The duke pressed his hand in a peculiar manner,—which he appeared to understand.

"Ah!—true," he continued, "Monseigneur could not have heard of it yet. In fact I only arrived an hour or two since."

"Arrived from where?" asked the duchess.

She knew very well. The abbé de Chauvelin, councillor's clerk of the parliament of Paris, had been sent to Mont-St.-Michael, as we have already seen, at the time of the dissolution of that body. He had come out bolder and more of a Jansenist than ever, and now he had just passed another six months in the same place. But he was one of Madame de Choiseul's best friends, and she loved, as she said, to *enrage* him,—which the witty abbé generally repaid with usury.

He gazed at her, upon this singular question, with a look half rueful, half laughing, and shrugging his shoulders,—always high enough, he heaved a deep sigh and moved away.

"Poor man!" she resumed, "has he left his tongue at that place?"

He turned and answered,—"No; I have not left it, but sharpened it."

"Is that the reason it remains in its sheath?"

"Until it is taken out."

"And when will that be?"

"When I find, Madame, an adversary who is worth the trouble."

He saluted her with a mischievous air, and continued to move away.

From all quarters the guests flocked to welcome him. Six

months of imprisonment had prodigiously increased his importance,—as might have been foreseen,—in the eyes of all those who were to have been intimidated by it. The men envied him; the women no longer thought him so very ugly. It was a singular thing to see such a reception tendered openly, in the sight of the minister, to a man who had just been punished as a rebel, and who was known to be ready to show the same disposition again. It was well known, moreover, that the minister had a hand in his imprisonment,—and yet the duke had been seen to receive him cordially. All this, and the last circumstance, more particularly, serves to prove what we have asserted in regard to the universal want of respect for principles and authority, as well as the absence of self-respect, which then prevailed. Those charged by the State with the support of the crown were openly connected with those who made it their business to hold royal authority in check. The official defenders of religion made a point of being good friends with the preachers of impiety and disorganization. Just as two lawyers who thunder at each other in court, go away afterwards arm in arm; and two actors who appear ready to devour each other on the stage, retire into the green-room and quietly resume their interrupted conversation.

It was in a great degree owing to this excessive levity, that such bitter hatred had appeared against the Jesuits. "That which is most detested, in periods of disquiet and disorder," says a historian,* "is order. The Jesuits were too well organized to please a state of society resembling a mob." All these people who had no principles, and knew it, were displeased at finding principles in others; and what offended them in the Jesuits was, not to see that they had bad principles,—that would not have troubled these people,—but to see that they

* Capefigue.

had any whatever. In every age there is to be found some Aristides whom men are weary of hearing called *the Just;* some man or some institution which cannot be pardoned for remaining unshaken when everything else totters. Let this immovability be the result either of virtue or vice,—no matter,—it is all the same in the eyes of the demolishing party. Whether a land-mark be well or ill placed, there will always be some who will tear it down simply because it wearies them always to see it in the same spot.

On the other hand, this bitterness was for certain men a means of persuading the public,—of persuading themselves, to a certain point,—that they too had fixed principles; that they were not incapable of devoting themselves to a work, and of giving to it their time, their strength, and their life. There are many Catholics whose Catholicity is restricted to detesting the Protestants; there are also Protestants whose religion consists in not being Catholics,—and at that time there were many persons who believed themselves sufficiently moral because they attacked the morals of Escobar, sufficiently religious because they rejected the religion of the Jesuits and men of strong principles because they used as much perseverance in battering down this powerful organization, as its founders had used in building it up. What we say of the strifes and struggles of 1760, may be asserted almost word for word, of those of the present day.

We would not place the Abbé de Chauvelin, who had been sharpening his tongue at Mont-St.-Michael, precisely in the last category. With him, levity of manner was rather a sacrifice to the habits of the day, than the effect of inclination or want of principle. His morals were irreproachable; and it does not appear that his enemies were justified in ascribing to his deformity alone the purity of his conduct. A prebendary

of Notre-Dame, he was on the worst possible terms with the archbishop, but on account of his Jansenist and parliamentary inclinations, not on account of free-thinking nor libertinism. Left to himself he would probably have contented himself with disliking the Jesuits, but he would have recoiled from touching things for which he still had a reverence, by aiming a blow at them. But as men of sense are frequently at the service of fools, and good intentions follow in the wake of bad ones, he had allowed himself to be put at the head of this crusade. Jansenists, parliamentarians, philosophers, all joined to urge him onward. His popularity had even extended into those classes which, since the days of the Fronde, had appeared unconscious of everything which passed beyond their limits. The fish-women had sung lamentations for his exile and pæans on his return. His second exile had nearly caused an insurrection, and his second return was to be a new triumph. They were ready to salute him as the future saviour of his country.

LII.

TWO MEN OF THE NEW RÉGIME.—WIT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

When he had walked long enough through the saloons, the duke, who had not lost sight of him, addressed him again. They talked for a few moments with those who came in their way; and then slowly moving off, the duke said in a low voice:

"I will steal away,—you come after me, and bring La Chalotais with you."

"Is he here?"

"Yes. Look for him."

Chauvelin resumed his walk. He at length discovered, in the recess of a window, him whom he sought.

"Well, comrade," he said, "it seems that I must come and look for you."

"I was witnessing your triumph from afar."

"And doubtless my laurels will prevent you from sleeping."

"Probably."

He spoke the truth, although he laughed. René de la Chalotais, attorney-general of the parliament of Brittany, played there the same part which Chauvelin played at Paris. Active and ardent, he burned to throw himself into the thickest of the fray. He envied the lot of the magistrates of Paris, obliged to come into contact with the ministers, the princes, and the king. He consoled himself as well as he could, in the meantime, at the expense of the duke d'Aiguillon, governor of Brittany. No one surpassed him in the art of transfixing a man with one of those witticisms which fasten themselves to their object, even though they may not be the best in the world. "If he did not cover himself with glory, he at least covered himself with flour," he remarked of this same duke d'Aiguillon, because, during a battle, he had unluckily entered a mill for a few moments. This combat had saved Brittany, and the governor, who had commanded it, remained the victim of this malicious joke.

"Who is to begin?" resumed Chauvelin. "What are you about at Rennes?"

"We only await the signal."

"You will not have long to wait, I think."

"What says Choiseul?"

"He is awaiting us in his cabinet. Let us walk, and then we will go out unperceived."

But as they passed the duchess, she exclaimed:

"Come! Monsieur de St.-Michael, come! You have been churlish, but you shall be forgiven."

He approached her.

"But only after due punishment," she added. "See how much more gallant your brother is than you! Read these verses. That shall be your punishment."

It was a singular enough production, which had been the rage for the last two days; for little verses had not lost the privilege of sharing with the greatest events the attention and interest of the gay world. The Marquis de Chauvelin, a brother of the abbé, found himself, while on a visit to the Prince de Conti, at Isle-Adam, at table with seven young and pretty women, his own wife included. Some one jestingly compared them to the seven capital sins. The idea took. They drew lots who should be Pride, who Envy, etc., and the Marquis de Chauvelin had soon written a couplet for each.

TO MADAME DE MAULEVRIER.

PRIDE.

Pride owes to you a change most sweet;
In former times *Vice* was its name;
But since 't is honored with your choice,
Why, *it* and Justice are the same.

TO MADAME D'AGÉNOIS.

ENVY.

I 'm too indulgent far, perchance,
But still I must forgive your sin;
For sure I must excuse in you
What, seeing you, I feel within.

TO MADAME DE SURGÈRES.

AVARICE.

Altho' your sin a little odd may seem,
How easily it could become my own:
I feel that *I* had avaricious been,
If you as mine, dear Iris, I had known.

TO MADAME DE CHAUVELIN.

GLUTTONY.

In now reflecting on your sin,
And looking on your charming face,
In truth I am right vexed to think
That I your dishes cannot grace.

TO MADEMOISELLE DE CICÉ.

INDOLENCE.

To idleness resign yourself,—
For Iris, when one's sure to charm,
'T is well to rest in quietness;
Your indolence can do no harm.

TO MADAME DE COURTEILLES.

ANGER.

Without forbidding wrath to you,
I'd force you, Chloris, to be calm;
For angry you should never be,
Except at those you cannot charm.

There are six of the verses. They who wish for the seventh may find it in Grimm's journal. Anything could be said in those days, provided it were said in verse.

"Very good," said Chauvelin, coldly re-folding the paper.

"Very good! Is that all you have to say?"

"I have long known that my brother is witty. May I go away now, Madame?"

"Where to, if you please?"

"You do not know where I came from: what have you to do with where I am going?"

"Malicious! No, you shall not go."

"Oh!"

"Not until you have said or showed us something new. Madame la Courteilles, *Anger*, come and help me to keep Monsieur de Chauvelin."

Madame de Courteilles was, in fact, a few steps off.

"Shall I be obliged to grow angry?" she asked.

"By all means. According to the verse it will be a proof that you do not please me."

She smiled. He rejoined his friend; and a few moments afterwards, they entered the cabinet of the minister.

LIII.

PLANS.

"Always imprudent, Chauvelin!" said the latter. "You have put me on thorns. To come publicly to my house! To attempt to say to me, before forty people, that I knew you were at Paris! Why did you not also tell that it was I who had you set free?"

"O, that is well enough known."

"Perhaps so; but that is no reason for proclaiming it on the house-tops."

"My emotions, Monseigneur,—my acknowledgments—"

And the abbé spoke in the serious tone which he only employed when jesting.

"Ah ha! your acknowledgments!"

"Well,—yes,—I acknowledge—"

"What?"

"That you must have need of me, since you have had me taken out of prison."

"It may be so. But, gentlemen, let us speak seriously. You know what is going on at Versailles. You are aware, perhaps, that we think of commencing the attack by the downfall of Father Desmarêts."

"An intrigue?" said La Chalotais. "I 'll have nothing to do with it."

"Nor I," said the abbé. "As much fighting as you like, even if I had to return to my rock for ten years. But an intrigue,—no."

"Let it alone, then, gentlemen, let it alone! Who asks you? What could you do, if you would, to overthrow Father Desmarêts? The king need only know that you were concerned in the plot, to keep his man forever."

"I know that very well," replied Chauvelin. "What I meant to say, and La Chalotais also, doubtless, was that these petty intrigues have had their day; that we are strong enough to do without them; that—"

"Ah ha! an insurrection?"

"No, Monseigneur,—a revolution. A good legal decree of the parliament for the suppression of the order of the Jesuits; and we should see then if the king would keep his."

"Peste! Monsieur! If these walls had ears, it is not for ten years only that you would be sent to Mont-St.-Michael. And if it were known that I,—*I* listened to these fine speeches—"

"Then you would go there with me, Seigneur Fouquet."

"Let us return to our subject, if you please. This beginning, it seems, is not to your taste?"

"Then you are absolutely determined, in your quality of prime minister, to begin with these petty expedients?"

"Petty! That depends upon circumstances. In the first place, do you know whom I put in Desmarêt's place?"

"The abbe de Narniers, of course."

"Father Bridaine, with your permission."

"Ah! it is no longer I who say no. He himself would never consent. Where will you catch him, besides?"

"Here."

"Here?"

"In five minutes, perhaps. You see I think of everything."

"Monseigneur is a great minister."

"Ah! you admit it?"

"Until your next orders."

"Good. Well—stop—is not there a carriage entering the court?"

"Yes."

"Go to the window—look out—the court is lighted."

"The carriage stops."

"Who gets out?"

"No one yet. Ah! a priest."

"It is my man,—go quickly back to the saloon, gentlemen."

"We should like very much to see him."

"He does not know you?"

"No."

"Well, then, wait here until he comes in."

A valet appeared. The duke did not wait for him to speak.

"Make him come in," he said, advancing towards the door himself. And as the priest approached, he exclaimed:

"Come in, my Father! come in! Ha!"

It was Desmarêts.

LIV.

UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL.—A PRIME MINISTER IN AGONIES.—JESUIT AND JANSENIST.

The duke had too much command over himself, to allow his surprise to be visible after the first moment; but what curiously complicated the situation was, that his two friends, knowing neither Father Bridaine nor Desmarêts by sight, saluted the supposed Father Bridaine in their most respectful manner.

Although Desmarêts had never seen Chauvelin, he recognized him from his appearance. This, as we have said, was no difficult thing. He remained motionless upon the threshold.

"Gentlemen, Father Desmarêts, confessor to the king," said the duke, precipitately; for the whole scene had not lasted three seconds.

"Messieurs de la Chalotais and de Chauvelin," he continued, presenting them in their turn to the astonished Jesuit.

"Gentlemen," said Desmarêts, "I had no more expectation of meeting you here, than Monseigneur had, I see, of my visit to him. I was already surprised to perceive that I was admitted so unhesitatingly—"

And as he made this observation, he thought to himself,—"It is odd, but my arrival here is precisely similar to that of Bridaine at the archbishop's."

"I should be distressed," he continued, "to have stumbled upon a secret, for Monseigneur said, 'Come in, my Father.' Happily he did not add the name."

This was equivalent to asking the name, but as no one replied, he smiled, and resumed, "In short, one thing is certain, that you were not expecting the confessor to the king."

An almost imperceptible glance exchanged between Chauvelin and his friend at these words, did not escape the Jesuit. He had heard a rumor of the conspiracy against him, now he doubted of it no longer. He for whom he had been taken was the person who was to fill his place, and who could this be if not Father Bridaine?

"Sit down, my Father," said Choiseul. "If these gentlemen are *de trop*, they will have the kindness to retire for a moment."

"Certainly," they said.

"No, gentlemen, by no means. I am not sorry that you also should hear what I have come to say to Monseigneur."

This was a serious commencement. Choiseul in turning to take a seat, quietly bolted the door. He did not wish to risk an encounter between Bridaine and the confessor.

"Gentlemen," began the confessor, "when a city is besieged, it is generally agreed that those parts of the defences surmounted with a black flag are not to be fired upon. They cover the churches, hospitals, and places which are or ought to be held sacred.

"I wish now to plant one of these standards. In the midst of the attack directed against us from all sides, I wish that there should be one point considered as sacred and inviolable.

"You understand me, I think. You know what has taken place at Versailles. I have gained a victory over the king which should rejoice every friend of religion and morality;—and yet I have reason to believe that there are many who will be displeased at it. Will you let me proceed with this work? Will you respect the still fragile edifice which I have succeeded in raising in the conscience of the king, upon the ruins of his

immoralities? Would you rather that he should be damned, than that he should be saved by the ministry of a Jesuit? This is my question. It is a frank one. The answer, I do not doubt, will be equally so."

"Will Monseigneur allow me to reply?" asked La Chalotais.

"Certainly," answered the minister, who asked nothing better than to be silent.

"My Father," said the attorney-general, "your idea of the black banner appears to me so good a one that I must ask permission to carry it out still further. The places thus designated are, it is true, respected in war. But if it be suddenly discovered that they are peopled by enemies, and that beneath the shelter of this standard, destined to turn aside all attacks, assaults are preparing, mines excavating,—what think you? Must it still be respected?

"You see how we, the enemies of your order, are situated; of your order, I say, and by no means of those honorable men which it may number among its members. If we are led to include you *all* in our attacks, ascribe the fault to your constitution alone, to your unity, your vows of absolute obedience, which make of your order an army, and consequently of each individual a soldier who is to be fought against, even if one has nothing against him. If we constantly batter down all that you build or defend, it is because there is not one of your works, even excellent in itself, which is not connected with the whole, which does not shelter something of which we disapprove. You carry Christianity among the heathen, but it is a mutilated Christianity; you civilize them, but just enough to subject them to you. As moralists you are inexorable in some few conspicuous cases, accommodating and relaxed in a thousand others. Masters of public instruction, learning and

ignorance equally answer your purposes. You excel in teaching literature in your colleges, and superstition in our villages, —geometry to the former,—mysticism to the latter. And all this is the same work; and all these men occupied in so many different things form in reality but one;—they cannot if they would, do otherwise than form one. In vain you claim to be only confessor to the king; in vain would you wish it. You are an advanced sentinel; by virtue of the very fact that you occupy a post, you cannot avoid being one of the twenty thousand points of that weapon, of which it has been said that the handle is at Rome, and the point everywhere.

"It is evident that in attacking you we risk striking many things which ought to be safe from every attack; but again, whose fault is this? Why are you everywhere,—of everything, and in everything? To confine ourselves to a single fact. Here you are, confessors to all sovereigns. Do you honestly believe that this is natural, necessary,—a thing ordained by God?"

"Why not?" asked the Jesuit.

"Why not? Certainly, we should find it difficult to prove the contrary to you mathematically. But that is no reason why we should not be firmly convinced that it cannot have been the will of God to concentrate in you alone all the power and life of the church."

"Monsieur," said Desmarèts, "I see, what for that matter I knew already,—that we are to expect no quarter from you. But you do not answer the question which I had the honor to ask Monseigneur, and to which I confess I should prefer him to reply."

"What question?" said the minister.

"You have forgotten? I asked if I should be allowed to complete the work which I had begun with the king."

"Well, Monsieur," said the abbé de Chauvelin, "could not Monseigneur in his turn ask you why you have so long delayed commencing this work. What! you have been confessor to the king for seven years; your society has had the disposal of the same situation,—thanks to secret negotiation, of which you probably know more than I do,*—for thirty-eight years, if I am not much mistaken, and because the king suddenly feels a little regret for the immoralities which you have done nothing to hinder,—are you to have the right of protecting yourself behind this commencement of a change? But it seems to me, my Father, that the best way of proving that this post belongs of right to you, would be to fill it with more success. So long as the kings choose to be their own masters you can do nothing,—as soon as they submit you can do too much. But we,—we wish neither a débauchee nor a bigot on the throne, so—"

Choiseul saw that the usual frankness of the indomitable councillor had taken possession of him. He tried to calm him with a look, but Chauvelin was no longer capable of observing this.

"No," he resumed, still more loudly, "neither a débauchee nor a bigot! What good does it do us to have him kneel before a Jesuit instead of a mistress, if he finds there the same inspiration of servility as a man, and despotism as a king? What good does it do."

"Monsieur de Chauvelin! Monsieur de Chauvelin!" cried the duke, almost supplicatingly. But Chauvelin heard still less than before.

* Secret article of a treaty concluded with Spain upon the occasion of the marriage projected between Louis XV. and an infanta. The first confessor of the king had been the abbé Fleury, author of an "Ecclesiastical History."

"What is it to us that he changes his adviser, if he is still for his kingdom the same indolent ruler, who only arouses himself in order to strike, to gag, to crush. All the abuses which have been accumulating for centuries we see centred in him. All the evils—"

"Chauvelin, I order you to be silent," cried the duke, beside himself.

"Let him alone, Monseigneur,—let him alone," said the Jesuit, quietly. "It is well to know how the king is served,—and *served up* by his *trusty* and *well-beloved* parliament."

"Excuse him, my Father,—excuse him. He says more, instead of less than he thinks,—I am sure of it. This will go no farther, I hope?"

"Go no farther, Monsieur the duke? It is not under the seal of confession, I think, that these gentlemen have opened their hearts to me. Let them not be afraid, however."

"Afraid!" interrupted Chauvelin. "Do we look as if we were afraid?"

"Afraid? No, gentlemen, that was not what I meant. I know that there are people for whom martyrdom has its charms, particularly when they can get off easily," he added, glancing at Chauvelin,—"when they have friends to soothe it, to shorten it."

Here he turned towards the duke with a slight smile.

"All that I meant to say was," he continued, "that there is no likelihood of my going and repeating to the king, with names and dates, what I have accidentally heard here. But when I see his majesty again disposed to rely upon the fidelity of his parliament, you must confess that it would be treason for me not to tell him the true state of the case. What is Monseigneur's opinion?"

"I have no advice to give you."

"Ah!"

"Nor to receive from you. Give advice to the king, if he wishes it."

"In fact he has asked my advice. And the true purpose of my visit was to see what I should have to reply to him."

"It was upon some important point, it seems."

"Very important. He asked me if a king can conscientiously keep a minister who is in high favor with the enemies of royal power, who is leagued with—"

"Leagued with them! I!—" cried the duke, already quite pale.

"Good!" murmured La Chalotais, "now he will deny everything."

"Leagued with them," resumed Desmarêts, "receiving them in his saloons, in his cabinet—"

"The king cannot have said that, Monsieur."

"Not precisely. That is my arrangement of it. I put facts where the king had only suspicions, and just suspicions, as you see."

The minister was annihilated. The Jesuit triumphed, but in true jesuitical style. His air was more humble, his eyes more meekly cast down than before. When he judged that the arrow had sufficiently struck home, he rose.

"You are going, my Father?" asked the duke.

And at the same moment the minister cast a half supplicating, half wrathful look at his two friends. In their presence he dared not enter upon an explanation which they would look upon as cowardly, and how indeed, even if he were alone with Desmarêts, could he enter upon this explanation without humiliating himself?

"You are going?" he repeated, for Desmarêts had not replied. He had silently taken his hat and was preparing to go out.

"I am expected at Versailles," he said, a length.

"By the king?"

"By the king."

Choiseul accompanied him a few steps, as if to show him out. A violent struggle was seen upon his countenance. Suddenly, when the Jesuit opened the door, he opened another, and exclaiming, "Come! come!" he drew him towards it. Desmarêts appeared to hesitate; then he followed him, and the door was again closed.

LV.

WHAT NEXT?

The two friends looked at each other; one furious, the other laughing.

"Well?" said the latter.

"Well?" repeated Chauvelin.

"After that, depend upon the courage of a minister!"

"Did you think that there existed a minister who was philosopher enough to sacrifice his place?"

"He will promise now all that the other wishes."

"It is for us, then, to absolve him from his promises."

"To absolve him?"

"Yes, by removing all possibility of his fulfilling them."

"So we are to go on?"

"Before three months, I will have the parliament order me to present him with a report of the constitution of the society."

"*Perge, sequar.*"

"By the way, did it occur to you that if the Jesuit had gone out of the other door, he would have found himself face to face with his successor?"

"The successor will not succeed, since Choiseul is making friends with the other. When he comes—"

"He has come. While you were talking, I heard the sound of a second carriage. I looked out, and saw another priest arrive. He had on gaiters."

"That was he. Let us go back to the saloon. We shall see him as we pass."

But there was no one in the waiting-room.

"He must have been shown into another room," said Chauvelin.

"Or he was perhaps tired of waiting. They say he is not much of a courtier."

And they returned to the saloon, where they again mingled with the buzzing groups which were scattered about the vast apartment.

LVI.

DIPLOMACY AND JESUITISM.

It was into his library that Choiseul had conducted Desmarêts. Three windows opened upon one side of the apartment, which at this moment was only illuminated by the light which gleamed through them from without. All the rest was in shadow. Before the nearest window a few scattered seats were visible.

"Sit down, my Father. We are alone. Let us have some talk," said the minister, in a voice which he vainly endeavored to render calm.

"Let us have some talk," said Desmarêts, externally calmer than ever, because he now felt agitated.

"What you have just told me is—is true?"

"Quite true."

Then followed a long silence. The pale gleam of the lanterns was reflected from the ceiling upon their motionless faces. Each of them wished he could have seen the other more distinctly; each was glad that his own face was not more plainly visible.

Choiseul first broke the silence.

"You came, as you said, to speak to me with perfect frankness."

"I have done so."

"Have you told me all?"

"The king added a few words in regard to your talents—your services—"

"Ah!"

"Of which he said that he should regret to deprive himself."

"I am happy to—"

"But that he would not hesitate—"

"That he would not hesitate?—"

"An instant, if he felt himself commanded by his conscience to do so."

"But *you* are his conscience."

"When he heeds me. He appears, for that matter, quite disposed to heed me now. There was one moment when I had but to say the word, and—"

"But did you say this word?"

"Should I be here? I asked for time. I said that the question was a grave one, and that I wished to meditate upon it before God."

"Before God. Very well. But I imagine that you are not forbidden to reflect upon it before men also, and with men?"

Choiseul had gradually drawn nearer. He lowered his voice. The two seats nearly touched each other.

"Come," he resumed, "if you did not immediately reply to the king's questions, it was because you had your reasons,—"

"Perhaps."

"And because you had made certain calculations,—"

"Ah!"

"Which may be correct."

"You think so?"

"I do not *think* so,—I assert it."

He grew bolder. The Jesuit on his side had played the inflexible long enough; he began to feel that he was in a position to yield without losing anything.

"I assert it," repeated Choiseul. "Must I tell you what these calculations were?"

"It would be curious to hear."

"Curious, if you like. I neither ask you to say yes or no. Listen."

"I am listening."

"I will go and see the minister,—you thought to yourself. I will commence by sounding him, then I will alarm him. When he sees the sword suspended over his head, he will begin to make overtures to me, advances—"

"Go on."

"To which I will remain impenetrable, until they become more positive. Then I will begin to listen to him. He will offer, if not to protect us openly,—which he could not do without foreswearing himself,—at least quietly to repair the injury which has already been done us. He will promise to arrest,—as much as can be done,—the persecutions of the parliament; he will promise not to dream any longer of depriving me of my place as confessor. I,—on my side,—it is still you, my Father, who are speaking,—shall abstain from all hostile advice. I will tell the king that he is mistaken,—I will keep him

well disposed towards,—towards him whom he appeared to suspect; I— You are silent? Am I right?"

"You said that you would not ask me to say either yes or no."

"I had forgotten. Well,—it is still you who are speaking,—I shall come to an understanding with the minister, and we shall part friends—"

"Friends? that is saying a great deal."

"Allies."

"It is difficult."

"What then?"

"Another question? Try to remember that I am not to reply. Go on."

"I have done."

"It is then my turn to make suppositions?"

"If you will,—unless you think as I do, that it would be better to speak plainly."

"Be it so. Let us speak plainly. I accept what you offer. But I want more."

"More!—What?"

"Positive and formal promises on a certain number of points."

"Propose them, I am listening."

"In the first place, an entire rupture with Madame de Pompadour."

"If she leaves the court that will be easy."

"Rupture with the parliamentary party."

"Less easy. But I can let them see that they are not to count upon me. And do you imagine that I am really favorably disposed towards them?"

"No;—those in power cannot be friendly to those who have caused that power to totter. You only liked them out of

hatred to us, and now as it is us whom you are going to like—"

"No raillery. Is that all?"

"Not yet. Do not break entirely, if you do not choose it, with the encyclopedical party, but cause their publication to be suspended for an indefinite length of time."

"It is suspended."

"I know it; but they boast that from you they will receive permission to go on."

"They shall not receive it. What more?"

"You will send Father Bridaine back to the provinces—"

"Father Bridaine!—who told you?—"

The minister was amazed.

"Ah!" resumed the other, with his former smile,—"I guessed rightly then."

"These Jesuits guess everything," murmured Choiseul.

"I repeat,—you will send Father Bridaine back to the provinces."

"*Send* him back? He does as he likes. But I can decline seeing him."

"Then you are not to see him."

"Very well. What next?"

"You will deprive Narniers of his appointment as preacher to the king."

"Narniers falls naturally with the marquise. But he is to preach on Sunday, and it would be difficult between now and then to—"

"Let him preach. It will be the funeral oration of the fallen dynasty!"

"You are pitiless."

"We have been taught to be so."

"No, you were pitiless at your birth."

"It was because we knew at our birth what awaited us in this world. Monsieur de Choiseul, listen to me—"

The Jesuit had risen. His eyes gleamed with excitement.

"In this world," he resumed, "there are but two principles. What the generality of men call *good* and *evil*, we call *authority* and *liberty*. Liberty is the source of all evils, and the mother of all vices; authority is order, faith, virtue, everything. No! man was not born free. He is not free; he cannot, he never will be free. Do you know why you hate us, you philosophers, statesmen, and despots of every name and description? It is not because *we* are despotic,—no,—but because we are so more courageously, more perseveringly, more successfully than you. You fight against liberty, because it annoys you; we do so because we do not believe in it. You imprison a man, and he struggles to escape; we make a corpse of him, and he struggles no longer. But the secret of our strength is that we ourselves are like corpses in the hands of the power which sustains and guides us. You imagine this power to reside at Rome? A mistake. The handle like the point, is everywhere. You believe that power to be represented by certain men? A mistake. Our superiors are corpses,—our general is a corpse. The pope is a corpse. This power, accordingly, must not be sought for at all, or it must be sought everywhere, for it is everywhere. It is at Paris, it is at Rome, it is in the depths of the deserts of the New World, it is everywhere that man is to be found, since wherever there is a man, there are passions, there is a mind, a heart,—there is a *slave* in short, who awaits a master. Thus it is in vain that you hate us, all you who by divine right, or human right, by your own will, or the will of the nations,—aspire to govern. In spite of yourselves, you are our allies, our co-workers, our brothers, in this never-ending work of the subjection of the human race. Destroy

us, and you will recognize us in others;—in others, do I say? in yourselves. Disperse the spirit concentrated in us, and you will breathe it in the very atmosphere which surrounds you. Yes, we are despotism incarnate; but despotism is nature,—man,—God himself."

LVII.

AN APPARITION.

Suddenly, while the Jesuit was luxuriating in this terrible denunciation of human freedom, a voice was heard from the shadowy distance of the gallery, saying,

"*Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

"*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*"†

This voice was grave and sad. It seemed at the same time to express condemnation of the blasphemy, and supplication for pardon to the blasphemer.

And while the voice was heard, Desmarêts and Choiseul saw a man slowly advancing, whose appearance stupefied them with astonishment.

"Bridaine!" exclaimed the duke.

"Bridaine!" murmured the other.

Bridaine stopped.

"Bridaine, gentlemen, do you say? Say his voice,—for the voice certainly is his,—but the words which this voice repeated are addressed to you by—whom?"

And he approached still nearer, and stopped close to the Jesuit.

* 2 *Corinthians*, 3d chap. 17th verse. † *Galatians*, 5th chap. 13th verse.

"Not by me, my Father, by Saint Paul. And have you never read these words, which I could not help repeating upon hearing what you said? And here, thanks to you, is the fatalism of the ancients revived in the Christian world! 'My yoke is easy,' said Christ; and the human race, according to you, is destined to bend beneath a yoke of iron. He called mankind His flock, His lambs; you wish them to be your cattle! These are the lessons which you give to the rulers of this world! Thus you teach them to respect the image of God in their fellow-creatures, and the seal of Christ upon those brows bent to the earth around them! Good. Take courage; unite your efforts; reign, trample, crush. But the time will come, believe me, when God will in His turn choose to reign. 'Where is thy brother?' a voice will then cry,—a more terrible voice than mine; and you will not be able to reply, like the first murderer, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' For *you* are supposed to be the keepers of this flock whom Christ has purchased with His blood. You have promised,—you have sworn it. 'Where is thy brother?' the voice will ask. 'I have made a corpse of him, Lord,' you must reply.

"Monseigneur," continued the missionary, "I have heard too much of all this not to understand that I have nothing more to do here, even if my departure had not been one of the articles of the treaty. An accident, which I shall henceforth call a providence, caused me to enter this gallery, in order that a priest might not be seen waiting too long in an ante-chamber. An indescribable feeling, which was certainly not curiosity, held me motionless in the shadow. It seemed to me that I felt a hand which paralyzed my movements; I heard a voice in my heart, which said, 'Remain, listen. Dost thou think that thou understandest men? Thou dost not yet understand them. Remain; God wills that thou shalt see for once what

He sees always.' And I remained: I have heard all. And I shuddered to hear what some men can make of this religion of love, support and liberty, of which they call themselves the ministers. I have seen a statesman ready to do anything to remain in place,—I have seen a *philosopher* abase himself before a Jesuit,—I have seen hatred forgotten, in a common desire for dominion and support. Go on, gentlemen,—go on. You deserve to come to an understanding."

And he went out.

But the two others did not go on. A quarter of an hour afterwards, Desmarêts was on his way to Versailles.

LVIII.

A CRUSHING DISAPPOINTMENT.

But this quarter of an hour had been enough to weaken, almost to efface, the impression of this solemn scene. The confessor of the king was not the man to feel all that there was in the reprimands of Bridaine, truer and more penetrating than the declamations of the sceptics. As much a stranger to the Christian spirit as to that of the philosophers of the day, he scarcely understood better an attack in the name of the gospel, than a sarcasm in the name of reason.

He accordingly calculated quietly enough, ensconced in his carriage, the results of this visit to Paris. The interests of morality appeared to him to coincide admirably in this affair with those of his order, and with his own. He did not go so far as to imagine that the cause was gained; for, besides being far from depending seriously upon the support, or even the neutrality, of the duke de Choiseul, he knew very well that such storms as these are not the kind which can be calmed by

the voice of a minister, or even of a king. But Desmarêts had forced this minister, who could hasten the explosion, to tremble for himself. He had extorted from him promises which would bind him, at least for a few days; and these few days, in consummating the disgrace of the marquise, would deprive him of his principal supporter with the king. As to Desmarêts himself, he would keep his promises to the duke until the new order of things commenced. He would quiet the king's conscience in regard to him, by representing him as having broken with the fallen favorite; and thus he would succeed in separating his two greatest enemies. Things might go on in this way a year,—two years. The king might die; the Dauphin was under the influence of the Jesuits, and was, notwithstanding, generally liked. France, after having nearly been their tomb, might yet become their stronghold.

Upon arriving at Versailles,—it was past midnight,—Desmarêts perceived a light in the king's apartment.

He at first paid no attention to this. The king generally retired at a late hour.

However, he had scarcely entered the chateau, before this circumstance again occurred to him. He had not intended to visit the king until the next morning. What if he went immediately? Either the king was in the same mind, and, in that case, this zeal would please him; or he was wavering, and, in such a case, too much could not be done to strengthen him.

As he had admittance into all parts of the chateau, he soon arrived at the king's apartments. The valets were, as usual, awaiting his majesty's hour for retiring.

"The king has not retired?" he asked.

"No, my Father."

"Is he alone?"

"No, my Father."

"Who is with him?"

"Madame la—"

"*Who* do you say?" he interrupted.

"Madame la Marquise."

He was terribly pale. He had thought, on his first arrival, that he perceived something more than mere surprise at his arriving so late. One of the valets had smiled; another had turned away, as if to hide a laugh. Before asking a question, the confessor had guessed the answer.

He went away. As usual, he was accompanied to the door with great respect; but scarcely was it closed behind him, before an explosion of stifled laughter completed the downfall of his hopes.

LIX.

PALACES OF LOUIS XV.—CHOISY.—BELLEVUE.

What had taken place?

Let us go back some hours, and look in upon Louis XV.

The candles are just lighted. It is just about the time when Rabaut reached the house of d'Alembert, and Bridaine that of the archbishops.

We are in what the court jargon designates as "the little apartments." *Little* they are in reality, not only in comparison with the vast extent of the chateau, but also, and more particularly on account of the almost fabulous refinements of luxury and ease with which they have been overloaded by a capricious and worn out king. Louis XIV also had his; but in his time they were merely called the "private apartments." They were simple, and the king never remained in them long.

It was in the days of the Regency, that the little apartments,

properly speaking, had their origin. The Regent needed them to conceal,—not his amours, in those days no one cared to conceal them,—but his luxurious suppers, his daily, or rather nightly fits of degrading intoxication.

From other tastes, Louis XV adopted before he himself became vicious, that which vice had invented. While yet young, he was wearied and alarmed by remaining in those huge galleries, in which his magnificent ancestor had taken such satisfaction, because he was persuaded that his presence filled them. He needed a more home-like circle, and this circle embellished by the virtues of the queen, had been at first a sanctuary which was untouched by any poisonous breath from without. Louis XV was born an *ennuyé*, but at that period, he lounged and gaped in his own domestic circle.

Then came his immoralities; and then, the divinity being changed, the decorations of the temple must also be altered. The taste of the day, moreover, led to this. Luxury had made vast progress; not that extensive progress which may be connected with the noblest tendencies,—but a progress petty in its detail, and petty in its results; false in art, and dangerous in morals.

All this progress belonging to a period of decline, was naturally concentrated in the little apartments of the king. Each month, each week, brought its tribute of rarities and nothings. In order to describe these, we should require a pen made with the mother-of-pearl knife set with pearls, which was so much admired upon the golden writing-desk of Madame de Pompadour.

Very soon, as if the neighborhood of the grand apartments oppressed him, the king sent his architects, decorators, and painters to Choisy, enjoining them to out-do themselves. They took him at his word. Millions were swallowed in the work, but Choisy had become, in the annals of boudoirs,

one of the wonders of the world. There were seen for the first time, those famous little tables, called *servants* or *waiters*, the master-piece of the mechanician Loriot. Thanks to these, importunate, tattling servants, witnesses to the ingenious nightly orgies, were no longer needed. Every guest had his own table. Dishes and wines of all sorts, fruits, pastry, confections, all that could be desired or imagined, had but to be written down, and a spring touched. The table disappeared a moment, and returned with what had been sent for. It was something like the Arabian Nights.

Such was Choisy in the time of Louis XV.

At length even Choisy was thought to be too much like Versailles. It was still a *chateau*, although so much smaller. The king allowed himself to be persuaded that he must have, as the saying then was, his *sugar-plum box*. Accordingly, *Bellevue* was built. It rose as if by enchantment. The gardens were designed after the poetical descriptions of the island of Armida, in Ariosto; the apartments were such, that one might have asked, on entering, what more a fairy could have accomplished. There Madame de Pompadour was sovereign. The king liked there to be her guest, and to enjoy there, far from all noise, the refinements of luxury which she arranged for him.

LX.

THE KING AND HIS CONFIDANT.—VOLTAIRE'S LETTER.—VANITY OF RICHELIEU.—THE MARQUISE.

But we were at Versailles. Let us return thither.

In a drawing-room of the king's private apartments are seated two men, one on each side of the fire. They are not

looking at one another, and seem as if they did not care to do so.

One reclines nearly at full length upon an immense arm-chair. His features are large and majestic, but have a profoundly harassed, wearied expression. He does not appear to enjoy the comfort which is sought and generally found in such a position as he has taken.

The other has not seated himself so completely at his ease, but has nevertheless the appearance of being much more so. The immovability of his posture seems, however, to be a wearisome necessity to him. He yawns occasionally, but very quietly, as if he would not like his neighbor to perceive it.

At length a conversation commences between these two persons.

"Richelieu."

"What is your pleasure, sire?"

"I am so *ennuyé*."

"How can I help that, sire?"

Let us remind those whom this tone may surprise, that the duke de Richelieu was the particular friend of Louis XV. He was in public the most respectful of courtiers,—in private they were equals. But Richelieu never forgot himself less than in these familiar conversations. What the king took for the most perfect naturalness, was the perfection of art.

For the last half century the duke de Richelieu had been an epitome of all the good qualities and all the vices of the noblemen of his time. Brave and cunning, proud and mean, noble in his manners, and ignoble in his tastes, he remained, in spite of his age, the man of fashion, the model, whose successful imitation was looked upon as a desperate undertaking. People were half inclined to treat those as jealous and slanderous, who ventured to remark that he was sixty-four, that he

dyed his eyebrows, wore rouge, and false hips, and a false chest, and false calves. All this was well-known; in another it would have been looked upon as perfectly ridiculous, yet with him the result was a general effect which was envied by the youngest and handsomest of the court.

The strangest thing, however, was not that the duke should have employed all these means to rejuvenate himself, but that a man of sense should rely upon them so confidently as he did, and should actually imagine that he was still able to fascinate the women of the court by means of this patching up of his dilapidated person. After the king and the king's favor, he most loved the admiration of the women, and moreover he asserted and believed that they loved him. He boasted of inspiring at sixty, feelings as strong as those which he himself experienced at twenty-five. This was but another means of paying his court to the king. Louis XV. being ten years younger, the conquests of his friend served as a delicate means of promising him ten years longer of youth and triumph.

A tolerably long pause followed his reply of "How can I help that?" He had said it in the tone of a man who declines making any further reply, because he has already given a piece of advice which has been neglected.

"Richelieu!"

"What is it, sire?"

"I tell you that I am horribly *ennuyé*."

"And I say that I cannot help it."

"Come,—amuse me."

"That is just what your ancestor Louis XIV. said to Madame de Maintenon."

"Well?"

"And Madame de Maintenon replied that he was no longer *amusable*."

"You are mistaken, Richelieu. No one, not even his mistress, and still less his wife,* would have answered Louis XIV. impertinently."

"Which signifies, does it not, that I have just answered Louis XV. impertinently?"

"Something like it."

"Then I beg pardon, sire. Madame de Maintenon did not make that answer; be it so. She contented herself with thinking it,—and with saying it to two or three persons, who charitably repeated it to the whole court. Would you rather that I should do this?"

"A great piece of news you would tell! As if all Europe did not know that I was ennuyé!"

"At any rate, it was not I who told them."

"Of course not. Nobody is so much with me as you. To publish abroad that I am ennuyé, would be confessing yourself the most tiresome of men."

"Thank you, sire."

"Come. Have you nothing at all to relate to me? Absolutely nothing?"

"Why we have just been walking two hours in the gardens. I have related thousands of things to you. I have exhausted the court,—the city—"

"Really?"

"It is true that you were scarcely listening to me, and that—but stay; I forgot to show you something. See here—"

"What is it?"

"A little letter from Monsieur de Voltaire."

"Monsieur de Richelieu, you know that I do not like that man, or anything connected with him."

* It is well known that Madame de Maintenon was his wife for twenty-nine years.

"So much the more reason, sire, for reading his letter. It will be so much the more diverting to you."

"No."

"Very well."

He put the letter back into his pocket and was silent. A moment after, the king asked,—"What does he say in this letter?"

"He gives me a description of himself."

"That must be curious."

"Very curious indeed. But as your Majesty absolutely declines seeing it—"

"O no,—not at all. Read it to me."

"Ah! your Majesty wishes to be able to say, with a good conscience, that you have not *seen* it?"

"I am no Jesuit, Richelieu."

"I know it, sire. There are people, however, who are not so certain of it as I am."

"What do you mean?"

"*You can tell a man by the company he keeps.*"

"I keep company with the Jesuits!"

"No. But those who assert that you do,—will now have fair game—"

"I have forbidden you to talk to me about these things."

"'The king is good,' said the people, in the days of Henry IV; 'it is a pity that he should have *cotton** in his ears.'"

"Richelieu!"

"I have done. But others will talk. Your Majesty may depend upon it."

"Read the letter."

"'FERNEY, July 15, 1760.

"'It is not likely, Monseigneur, that I should have the imprudence to present myself before you'—"

* The Jesuit Cotton, his confessor.

"Did you actually invite him to come and see you?" interrupted the king.

"A general invitation,—out of civility."

"Richelieu, never, so long as I reign, shall that man set foot in Paris."

This time, the king had aroused himself. In his rare moments of energy and will, he strikingly resembled his redoubtable ancestor. The same eyes, the same voice, the same majesty.

Voltaire had several times already, had the honor of throwing him into that state of feverish irritation, when his glance seemed to say, "Am I still king?" At the sound of that name, which hovered like a ceaseless sarcasm over everything which was, or had been held sacred, the old Bourbon instinctively raised his hand to his crown. He settled it again upon his head, as if he had felt it totter beneath this breath of destruction.

"He in Paris?" resumed the marshal; "I swear to you that he has not the least desire to be there. He knows too well how much he gains by being heard from a distance; it gives him a sort of oracular air, and in the eyes of fools, he is greater by the whole distance between Paris and Ferney. Shall I go on?"

"Go on."

—"'before you in the fine state in which I am. All the world talks of your bag-wig, while I am unable to quit my night-cap. All who talk to you, swear that you are at farthest thirty-three or four'—"

"And how old is he?" asked the king.

"Alas! sire, only two years older than I am. He is sixty six,—I am sixty-four. I continue—"

"'You do not walk, you run;' he goes on. 'You are on your legs all day long. You could command an army as gallantly as ever'—"

"I should think so, indeed," murmured the marshal.

But the king did not appear to hear this. It was a subject of much speculation throughout Europe, why Richelieu no longer appeared at the head of the French army, particularly as it was well known that he was more than ever in the good graces of the king. Lous XV. probably had reasons of his own for acting as he did in this respect.

He resumed ;—"as gallantly as ever. As for me, I could not even act as your secretary, much less as your courier. The reason being, that my spindles, which I call legs, are no longer able to support your humble servant, and that my eyes are entirely *à la Chaulieu*, being bordered by great red and white wrinkles'—"

"Stop !" cried the king, "that is enough. Now I shall have that live mummy before my eyes, with his horrible red wrinkles—"

"Your Majesty knows very well that Monsieur de Voltaire is by no means as frightful as he makes himself out. He has a mania for being old—"

"Just as you have for being young. Do you know what I was thinking just now as you were reading ? I was asking myself which of you is the most absurd."

"Your Majesty is very kind."

"All things, however, taken into consideration, I believe that *he* is."

"Ah !"

"Yes,—but *you* will soon be ; nature justifies him every day more and more, while she proves you in the wrong.

"So much the worse for her."

"However, Monsieur de Voltaire is precisely the person of all others who understands you best. Not content with laughing at you—"

"He! laughing at me?"

"And do you not think that he was laughing in his sleeve, as he wrote those lines? Ha! my poor Richelieu, you are still more absurd than I thought. What, you do not comprehend that it is to make his court to you that he describes himself so ugly and you so handsome? And do you believe him capable of making his court sincerely to any one? I tell you that there is no one in the world who would more enjoy a laugh at your bag-wig, your rouge, your patches, your perfumes. Stay,—there is a certain verse—'Mutton with onion sauce,'—you know it without doubt?"

"No, sire, I do not."

"I shall have the pleasure, then, of giving you some information. It is not often I have it.

> "'Mutton with onion sauce, and lord with musk perfume,
> For your supper I propose.
> When Richelieu the gay appeareth in a room,
> Defend then well——

There is a word which comes next, which escapes my memory—"

> "'Defend then well your heart'——"

"That is it——

> "'Defend then well your heart, and well protect your nose.'"

"But you have heard the verse, it seems? I thought you said——"

"I fancied your Majesty alluded to a certain satirical verse."

"And do you not call that one satirical?"

"No, truly. '*Well defend your heart!*' why it is the finest eulogium I could covet, sire!"

"And '*well protect your nose?*'"

"Yes; but why? Because I am '*with musk perfumed*,' the author says. There are many who are not perfumed at all."

"Come, tell me honestly, when do you intend to leave off being young?"

"Ten years before your Majesty."

The king shrugged his shoulders and sank back into his arm chair.

Another long silence. Finally the king asked;

"Richelieu, what time is it?"

"Nearly nine o'clock, sire."

"Nine! only nine! And to think that there are people who pretend that time flies!"

"Time asks nothing better, than to fly,—but one must help it a little."

"Help it, then, for heaven's sake, help it to fly! Don't you see I am perishing of ennui?"

And the king rose and stamped his foot.

Richelieu also rose; for even when they were alone together, it would not have been permitted him to remain seated while the king was standing. But he leaned against the chimney-piece, and made no answer.

The king walked up and down before him, his head bent forward, his hands behind his back. Suddenly pausing, he looked him full in the face.

"Richelieu, this cannot last."

"Can *I* order it to be put an end to, sire?"

"I have given my word."

"To a Jesuit!"

"To a priest."

"What business had this priest to meddle?"

"You know very well that I summoned him."

"It is perhaps not the wisest thing your Majesty ever did. Much harm it would have done truly, if things had remained as they have been for the last twenty years."

"No matter, I have promised."

"A subject!"

"No; my master,—God."

"The deuce, sire! If your Majesty takes the matter in this way, I must inform you, beforehand, that you will not receive much from me, in the way of edification. Your majesty is at liberty to edify me,—well and good. So, after to-morrow, the Parc-aux-Cerfs is to be closed."

"Who says so?"

"Nobody; but it is the natural consequence of the delightful state of mind in which I find you. If God is so horribly shocked at your relations with Madame de—"

"Do not mention that name."

"Well,—with a certain distinguished lady, then,—why should He, who sees all, be less shocked at your obscure pleasures there? So there is no medium,—either you will not be damned at all, or you will be damned just as much for the Parc-aux-Cerfs as for—for the other. Did not Desmarèts tell you so?"

"Desmarèts never spoke to me save of the marquise."

"I thought so. That is so like these confessors, the Jesuits particularly! The outside, always the outside. Correct the faults visible to the eyes of men, or you will be damned. As for those which only God sees,—pooh! do as you will about them. I should like to show them, if I were king,—and, in fact, I show them enough without being king,—I should like to show them, I say, that I am, and intend to be, my own master in the one case as well as in the other,—in public as well as in secret."

"The matter of one's perdition? One has that always only too much in one's power."

"Ah! sire,—once more,—if you take this tone, I surrender at discretion. Come; let us leave this rubbish of the confessional, and try to simplify the question. Here is a king,—still young—"

"Hush!"

"A king who cannot, without danger of perishing from ennui, dispense with the society of a woman whom he loves—"

"But—it is not exactly the case—"

"Whom he has loved—"

"If you like it so—"

"In short, whose company is perfectly indispensable to him. It is insisted upon that he shall send away this woman. She must go, accordingly,—she must depart, her heart swelling with grief, from this palace which has become her home. And the ungrateful—"

"Bravo, Richelieu! bravo! That would be superb in a romance!"

Little sympathy as the marshal had with the sorrows of a forsaken woman, he could not help being struck with the extreme egotism here displayed. All Louis XV.'s character was contained in this *bravo*. What mattered it to him whether his mistress wept or not—whether she accused him of weakness and ingratitude, or not? It is for his own sake, and that alone, that he concerns himself at all about her. He is ready to think it a good joke that you could imagine it otherwise. Twenty years before, after his illness at Metz, when the public joy was displayed during his journey back, the Duchess de Châteauroux wrote, "He appeared touched. He is, then, susceptible of a tender feeling!" And she had been his mistress for two years.

"Not at all," replied Richelieu, in a tone of pique,—"not at all like a romance. But—"

"Go on," said the king, "go on. What is more natural, after all? A vivid imagination,—youth—"

"Sire, Louis le Grand said that a king should never use raillery."

"Not even against those who use it against him?"

"Did I do so?"

"What else but raillery was that little idyll of which you just recited the commencement?"

"Your majesty confounds me. I did not know that I was so malicious. Accordingly, I will hold my tongue, for fear of being so again."

"By no means. But come to the point."

"Well, then, the point is this. Your majesty is ennuyé. There is but one person in the world who can amuse you. This person is to go away. And if I were in your place for five minutes—"

"Well—what?"

"She should not go."

"Richelieu, you have been in the Bastile?"

"I have, sire."

"And do you remember what Monsieur the Regent said, when he sent you there?"

"Monsieur the Regent did me the honor to say, that if I had four heads, reason enough could be found to cut off all of them."

"And if you had six now, you ought to lose them all, for daring to give me such a piece of advice."

"Alas, sire! I have but one, and that is entirely at your service. But before you cut it off, I wish you would permit it to perform one of those masterpieces of sagacity which it is said to execute—not badly. May I?"

He was already at the door. The king laughed, but with the air of a man who laughs in order not to be obliged to speak seriously.

"Monsieur de Voltaire is right," he said; "you do not walk,—you fly."

"I will fly. May I?"

He raised his hand to turn the latch.

"You are but thirty-three or thirty-four—"

"Twenty-four, if you like. But may I? Yes."

And he opened the door.

"Richelieu! Richelieu!" cried the king, springing forward to detain him.

But Richelieu was already at some distance.

LXI.

THE CONSCIENCE OF LOUIS XV.

Then he slowly returned to the same place, and seated himself. Relieved that the precipitation of the old duke had spared him the trouble of ordering that which his conscience told him he ought not to wish, still the acquiescence he had showed in the plan was not without bitterness. It was not exactly a feeling of remorse, but rather a consciousness of his own weakness. He reflected, but not so much,—"I am doing wrong,"—as, "I can do, can will nothing." He looked upon the pleasures about to be restored to him as something imposed upon him by destiny,—which was bent upon making of him a sluggard king—a man at the mercy of any one who might determine to lead him; and although he had never seriously sought to emerge from this abyss, still his heart sank within him, when, from time to time, some circumstance led him to appreciate its depth.

Motionless, his eyes fixed, and his hands joined, he waited. But in vain might his heart been probed to discover any of those ardent impulses, which are used sometimes, in order to give to a fault committed, the excuse of passion. "He worked out his perdition quite coolly," said Duclos. This thought, although he did not understand it so clearly, accompanied him in the midst of all his immoralities. That vague vexation which one feels after having paid very dear for some useless or troublesome object, was almost constantly experienced by him. He felt the responsibility of the evil, and yet did not enjoy it, he plucked the forbidden fruit, and found that it had no flavor.

Still somewhat impressed by the religious sentiments which had been occupying his mind for some days, these ideas took a more serious tinge than usual. If it was not remorse which he felt, it was something more resembling it than usual. Never had he felt the void so great, the burden so heavy.

"She is coming," he murmured, "and I shall receive her. And the whole thing will begin again. What a chain! What a life! And then—at the end of it—oh God!"

He shuddered. He covered his face with his hands, as if to shut out some horrible apparition.

"But why—" he resumed, as if angry—"why so many temptations? What have I done to deserve being placed in the midst of so many dangers? No,—I shall not be weighed in the same balance with others, No, no. God would not be just."

He rose, as he said these words, like a prisoner defying his judge. Suddenly, he appeared to reflect deeply. A smile, nervous and forced, appeared upon his lips.

"God"—he murmured,—"always God."

Then lower still, as if he feared to hear himself, or to evoke an avenging phantom, he said—

"What do I know of Him? What does any one know of Him?"

This was not the first time he had endeavored to gain from impiety, the peace which was equally denied him by religion and vice,—by vice, because it cannot bestow such peace,—by religion, because she will not bestow it upon the vicious. He was not acquainted with the works of the infidels, and did not even allow them to be spoken of in his presence, but he had a general idea of the tendency of the negations of the day, enough at least to make him, when the thought of God annoyed him, secretly attempt not to believe in such a being. His belief, moreover, rested upon no solid foundation,—no serious study; it was with him an affair of tradition, habit, etiquette,—a vague necessity at furthest. If he had paid no attention to the roarings of infidelity, it was rather from idleness than from any horror or disdain. Such as his religion had been given him, he allowed it to remain; the idea of losing it, would have been less alarming to him than that of examining into it. He detested the encyclopedists, but because he looked upon them as troublesome fellows who would have done better to let the world go on its own way, and follow the crowd quietly. He persecuted those who were not Catholics, but much less from hatred of their doctrines, than from a horror of hearing the discussion of questions which he did not care to comprehend. How many men resemble him in this! How many rigorous anti-Protestants are there, who are within an ace of believing nothing at all!

Accordingly, from time to time he overstepped this narrow space between his persecuting religion and the infidelity of the day. But it was only by fits and starts; too weak and hesitating to be a Christian, he was also too much so to be an infidel. He soon sank back into his slumber; a bitter feeling of

discouragement being the only impression left by his perilous attempt.

Thus it was this evening, during the short absence of his not over-scrupulous confidant. After having felt vexation, mortification, anger, and rebellion by turns, he again sank back into himself, he was again himself, the Louis XV. of the last twenty years, the cold lover awaiting the approach of her who no longer awakened a feeling in his heart, but whose dominion had become a necessity, and, as it were, one of the conditions of his existence.

LXII.

MADAME DE POMPADOUR.—THE KING'S INDIFFERENCE TO HIS FAMILY.

At length she arrived. He received her as if nothing had taken place between them.

And yet she had not been able to see without emotion the return of her master's messenger; the return we say, for it had been through him that she had received the news of her disgrace. They had never been the best of friends, but this was rather from distrust than antipathy. Mutually jealous of their intimacy with the king, each calculated in secret, the injury which the other could do him, and each found in this examination plenty of reasons for holding aloof. The duke felt that if she took it into her head to deprive him of the king's favor, it was by no means impossible that she might succeed; and she, on her side, was aware that it was quite as possible that Richelieu might dethrone a favorite whose only tie was that of habit. However, what rendered her most uneasy,—her forty years,—was precisely the thing which in fact assured her the neutrality, or in time of necessity, the aid of the

marshal. If she were dethroned, another would in all probability take her place. Who would this other be? Undoubtedly a much younger person, and one much less disposed to remain on good terms with him. It was accordingly greatly to his own interest that he should endeavor to prolong the famous *friendship* so praised by the abbé de Narniers. A *friend* of the king was but his equal; a mistress would unquestionably surpass him in influence.

Accordingly, he had not scrupled, on being sent with the first message, to soften its severity,—so much the more because he called to mind the disgrace, three years before, of Monsieur de Machault for having been too rigid in acquitting himself of a similar commission. His hints, as may well be imagined, had been eagerly followed. It had been agreed to hasten nothing, to avoid any violent rupture, and to wait patiently until the king should be brought round by ennui. And, as we have seen, ennui had faithfully performed its part.

The marquise had remained at the château, awaiting, she said, a formal dismissal. And this had been regarded by the courtiers as so very uncertain, even as so unlikely, that her court had in the mean time, suffered no diminution. Although she might be nothing to the king, she had held the sway too long not to have made for herself a sort of sovereignty, independent of the crowned royalty of a king like Louis XV. Louis XV was not capable of wresting from her at one blow, as did Louis XIV from Madame de Montespan, the power of which he had allowed her to become possessed; he could only have done it by seizing himself with a firm hand the reins of government, and this was an effort of which he was utterly incapable. It was felt that he would never be able actually to deprive her of her sceptre, and that accordingly, so long as she was not replaced, they ran no risk in treating her as a sovereign.

And yet in this same palace, forgotten, almost unknown, lived a woman,—a queen, whose modest virtues formed a singular contrast to so many glaring vices. A strange fate was that of the queens of these two monarchs of France, so different in most respects, but so sadly alike in their immorality! History scarcely mentions them; contemporary biographers have more to say of the king's mistress in six months, than of his wife in twenty years. Scarcely have you beheld the pompous ceremony of her marriage, before you lose sight of her; you are only reminded of her again by finding, some twenty years after, a casual mention of her death. "This," remarks Louis XIV. "is the only sorrow she ever caused me." Alas! was it indeed a sorrow? It made no alteration in the state,—none even in the court. She occupied no place there,—what void could her death leave?

The king extended this indifference to his daughters. The death of one of them, the duchess of Parma, had profoundly affected him, but only as a warning to himself. He had not wept his daughter, but himself in her. All of them had, from their infancy, been the victims of this absolute egotism. Born at the period of the cardinal de Fleury's great plans of economy, (1730—1735) they had been brought up in a convent in one of the provinces, where they had been completely spoiled by alternations from the extreme of indulgence, to the most exaggerated severity.* Upon their return to Versailles, the king did not insist upon their taking part in his amusements, but he never dreamed of procuring them others. Their only promenade was the garden of the château. They loved flowers, but all they had were in vases upon the window seats, like the workwomen of Paris. They scarcely ever went out, and

* They were frequently punished by imprisonment in the funeral vaults of the convent.

thanks to the strictness of etiquette, the ordinary occurrences of life remained almost entirely unknown to them. When the younger of them took the veil at the carmelite convent of St. Denis, she confessed that one of the most disagreeable things which she encountered in her new life, was the being obliged to go up and down a little winding staircase.

And yet Louis XV., like Louis XIV., had always professe da great esteem for the mother of his children. He left her entirely at liberty, which was more than his predecessor had done. When he was obliged to appear with her in public, the most devoted husband could not have showed more respect. Apart from that, there was the most complete separation, and this state of things had become such a matter of course, that although there was always much speculation on the probable results of a rupture with the titular mistress,—no one ever dreamed of fancying that it might result in a reconciliation with the queen. The king himself never appeared to dream of such a thing, and as the remembrance of the queen had been entirely without influence upon his late plans of amendment, it could not be a motive to induce him to persist in them.

LXIII.

OLD HABITS.—VOLTAIRE'S DEDICATION OF TANCRED.—RICHELIEU'S ORTHOGRAPHY.—A NEW WORD.

When she perceived that his manner to her was just as usual, Madame de Pompadour understood that hers also should be so, and that the best means of securing her return to favor, was to behave as if she had never fancied herself in disgrace.

On the other hand, however, she must not appear altogether as if she had not suffered. But here she had but to wait and

see what the king would do and say. She knew him well enough to follow his impressions step by step, and never to be above or below what he might require.

"Come, Madame, come—" Richelieu had said when he introduced her into the apartment. "His Majesty is ennuyé, and so I lose my Latin." (Idiomatic. To have one's trouble for one's pains.)

"Then, Monsieur, you do not lose much," she replied, as she made her salutation to the king.

And the king burst into a laugh, charmed with this diversion, which deprived her return of all embarrassment, for the old duke's ignorance in regard to classical matters had long been proverbial at court, and his most trifling notes, replete with errors, proved that he was not much better acquainted with French than with Latin. Moreover, he was a member of the academy.

After having laughed twice as heartily as the others, firstly to show that he felt the point of the joke, and secondly to prove that he was not at all chagrined by it, he was about discreetly to take his departure, and had nearly reached the door, when the marquise and the king, both equally anxious that his presence should permit them to dispense with all explanations, begged him to remain.

"If his Majesty commands—"

"Certainly I do."

And the king with unwonted energy, drew forward two arm chairs, made a sign to the duke to take a third, and to the marquise to seat herself. Then as he took his seat, he said,—

"Ha! what are we about here? Drawing around a fireplace with no fire in it!"

And in truth they had done so.

"Habit, sire—"

"Yes,—habit—"

And he placed his feet upon the irons.

"Habit—" he resumed, as if speaking to himself,—"habit,—a great tyrant in truth. Because one has warmed one's self in a certain place for six months, one wishes to do so still. One always returns to the same spot. Nothing is changed. Only the fire is wanting."

He sighed.

His allusion became too plain. This time, in place of showing that he understood, Richelieu did his best to look unconscious. But the marquise said, in a somewhat dry tone,

"Your majesty is very much of a philosopher."

"Who? I?" he said quickly. "Were you listening? What did I say? Bah! let us talk of something else. Even if there is no fire, we will fancy there is. There,—come, now,—let us have one of those nice winter chats which you know so well how to manage."

But she did not reply.

"Come, marshal," he continued, "tell Madame what the old man at Ferney has been writing you. You know she doats upon him,—which makes me horribly jealous. Show him to her as he has depicted himself."

"He has shown himself better here, sire, I fancy, than in his letter to Monsieur. Read this,—I received it this morning."

"Peste! Madame. A tragedy in five acts. An epistle dedicatory. And all this came, you say?—"

"This morning."

"What! while you were—"

He stopped.

"Your majesty was about to say *in disgrace*."

"He ventured—"

"But he is at Ferney, sire, I imagine. And this book must have left there five or six days ago."

"True, true. You are right."

It was very evidently the case; but the king was none the less struck, in spite of himself, with the fact of this homage arriving at such a time. He was almost shocked to see that even chance came in to aid his mistress in maintaining the influential position of which he had just tried to deprive her. But suddenly another idea occurred to him.

"Ha! ha!" he said, rubbing his hands, "I should like well to be at Ferney!"

"Why, sire?"

"To see how crest-fallen he will look; for without doubt there is some letter now on its way, which will inform him what has taken place here, and how his dedication—"

"Was directed to one who should no longer receive such attentions. That was what your majesty wished to say,—was it not?"

"How he will long to run after it! How he will regret his sticks which he calls legs!"

"His—?"

"O! nothing. It is one of the witty conceits of his letter to Richelieu. Come, let us have this dedication."

She handed it to him, not without pride. Voltaire was the dispenser of fame. He could do more by a few lines, than a king with his treasures and titles. Had not a pope* been proud and happy to receive the honor now bestowed upon the marquise?

It was not that she was ignorant how far Voltaire was from always expressing the same sentiments in regard to her. She might have replied to all these charming lines just received, by

* Benedict XIV., to whom he had dedicated his Mahomet.

quoting to him various epigrams of which he was well known to be the author; and at the very moment when his homage took the elevated form of a dedication, who had not read what this same man said of her in the vile poem which the parliament had just condemned to be burnt?*

The king took the book, and read:

"'TANCRED, OR CHIVALRY:

"'TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

"'*To Madame the marquise de Pompadour.*

"'MADAME,—Every epistle dedicatory does not contain servile flattery; all are not dictated by interest—'"

But the king did not like to read. "Here, Richelieu," he said, "read me this."

"'—— all are not dictated by interest—'"

"Oh ho!" cried the king. "What was that parchment which you got me to sign last month? It contained something, if I remember aright, about an exemption from taxes for his estates of Ferney."

This was true; and the dedication was connected with various other matters in which the author needed the services of Madame de Pompadour. He had got wind particularly of a plot against his piece which was to be performed in the beginning of September, and consequently hastened to put it under powerful protection. His correspondence about this time is filled with the most curious confessions; but the most curious of all is the *naïveté*,—we had almost said the sincerity,

* "Telle plutôt cette heureuse grisette
Que la nature ainsi que l'art forma
Pour le sérail, on bien pour l'opéra."
LA PUCELLE. *Edition of* 1756.

with which he persuades himself that nothing could be more noble and disinterested than this dedication. He writes:

"How do you like my little *pompadourian* epistle? Am I not very dignified? Is there anything in it of the *dejected Ovid?* Do I seem like an exile? Do I descend to ask any favors?" This to his friend the count d'Argental. Far from fancying that he solicits anything, he is only afraid that people will be too much struck by his pride. He wrote, some days after: "Madame de Pompadour must have been very chicken-hearted to be frightened at my *proud* dedication." He did not understand that servility is frequently only the more complete because it puts on a haughty air. The more you pretend not to be soliciting anything, the more you are humiliated, in reality, in the eyes of the person who is perfectly well aware that you are doing so.

"Go on," said the king.

"'—— are not dictated by interest. I have observed since your childhood the development of your grace and talent, and have been treated by you, in all circumstances, with unvarying kindness. If any censorious person should blame me for the homage I render you, it can only be one with a naturally ungrateful heart. I owe you much, Madame, and I am bold to confess it. And I venture still farther,—I venture to render you thanks thus publicly for the kindness you have shown to a great number of literary men, great artists, and men of merit of various kinds. I am aware that there are terrible cabals going on'—"

"There we are!" interrupted the king. "I was surprised that we had heard nothing yet of his gout and his misfortunes. Cabals! Have you read the *Ecossaise*, marquise?"

"No, sire."

This was false. She it was who had been the means of authorizing its performance.

"Nor I," said the king; "but it appears that it is an abominable production. If all the evil said of him for the last thirty years were collected, it would not equal the half of the ribaldry and abuse with which he persecutes Fréron from the beginning to the end of it. And *he* complains of cabals! But go on."

"'—— that there are terrible cabals going on. Literary men, like statesmen, will always be calumniated; and I confess that my disgust for these cabals has induced me to take refuge in this retreat'—"

"A fine retreat, in faith," interrupted the king again, "to which all Europe makes a pilgrimage, and where a man writes the *Ecossaise!* He is amusing himself at your expense, marquise, as he did at yours, Richelieu. Come, perhaps he will laugh a little at me too! Go on."

"'——to take refuge in this retreat, which alone can bestow happiness. But I must confess, that *you* have never paid any attention to those little cliques; and accordingly, I have never met with any literary man, nor any unprejudiced person, who does not do justice to your character, not only in public but also in private discussions, where it is much more the custom to blame than to praise. Believe me, Madame, it is something to possess the good opinion of men who know how to think'—"

"Ah! good—*know how to think*. That is sublime. Another of their cant phrases. Once upon a time people simply *thought;* now-a-days, they *know how to think*, they *learn how to think*,—like Lauraguais. Did you hear of my adventure with him?"

"No, sire."

"Tell her about it, Richelieu."

"Monsieur de Lauraguais, just arrived from England, made his appearance yesterday at Versailles. He did his best to attract the king's attention, and the king did his best to look as if he did not see him—"

"Ah! Richelieu, you color it too highly."

"Is it false, sire?"

"Go on, go on."

"Well, by dint of various manœuvres, de Lauraguais at length forced the king to remark him. 'There you are, count,' said his Majesty. 'Whence do you come?' 'From England, sire.' 'And what have you been doing there?' 'Learning to think.' (*Penser*, to think,—and *panser*, to rub down a horse,—are pronounced in the same way, although spelt differently.) 'Ah! learning to rub down (*panser*) horses, without doubt,' replied the king, turning his back on him. The point of the story is, that before turning philosopher, Monsieur de Lauraguais thought of nothing but horses, and the care of his stables. So with the two meanings of the word *penser*—"

"What do you say, Richelieu?"

"The two meanings of the word *penser*—"

"The word *penser* has two meanings?"

"Why, sire, you yourself—"

"And how do you spell this word *penser* which has two meanings?"

"P–E–N–S—"

"Bravo! Ha! ha! Good! This is better than my joke against the poor count! P–E–N!—P–E–N!—"

"When your Majesty has laughed sufficiently,—I shall be glad to know the reason."

"Man *thinks*, (*pense*,) my dear duke," said the marquise, "but one *rubs down* (*panse*) horses,—spelt with an A."

"Pooh! so much fuss about nothing!"

"You think so?" said the king. "Very true,—a king of France who sets to work to teach orthography—"

"Louis-le-Grand would never have done it."

"Because he knew nothing about it himself, my dear duke."

"Neither did those noble chevaliers of other days, who signed their parchments with the hilts of their swords, know anything about it,—"

"True, but they were not members of the academy."

"Sire! sire! I have never seen you so malicious."

"Well, well, we will stop there. Go on."

It was partly from choice that Richelieu remained at sword's points with orthography. He pretended to look upon it as something too plebeian; he wished, while speaking, and even writing tolerably well, to retain a little resemblance to the glorious dunces of the ages gone by. Thus it was that he affected to blunder over plebeian names, while he found no difficulty in remembering the most complicated patronymics of the aristocratic families. He pretended, for instance, not to be able to recall whether the abbé Arnaud, one of his colleagues of the academy, was called Arnaud or Renaud.

He went on reading.

"'——Of all the arts which we cultivate in France, the art of tragedy is not the least deserving of public attention, for it must be confessed that it is the style in which the French have most distinguished themselves. Moreover, it is only at the theatre that the nation meets together'—"

"Come, now," cried the king, "it is not in order to jest, that I interrupt you this time. I seems to me that these gentlemen, if they do respect orthography, begin singularly to alter the meanings of words. My subjects have become *citizens;* my people they call *the people*, *the nation*,—a something which

forms a body, which thinks, which wills. Where, pray, is this body? Are we still at Athens? Ah! 'the *nation* meets together at the theatre!' I confess that I did not suspect it. And pray inform me, what *is* the *nation*, where there is a king?"

"That is what Monseigneur the Regent said one day to the English ambassador Lord Stair."

"And Lord Stair replied?—"

"The nation is nothing,—so long as there is no standard raised."

"And every standard, in France, would necessarily be an insurrectionary one."

"Unless you raise it yourself, sire."

"And against whom, if you please? Henry III. endeavored to proclaim himself chief of the league, and the league devoured Henry III. If I should forget myself so far as to force myself to head the crusade which is preached at the present day, do you think that my throne would be the more solid for it? No! no! While I reign, there is no nation! And woe to him who should assert the contrary!"

"Shall I go on?" asked Richelieu.

"No,—enough of this."

He took the book from him, and threw it upon the table. The spectre of the nation had terrified the king.

LXIV.

NEW WORDS AND IDEAS.

And from that period, this spectre approached with astonishing boldness. The words *country* and *citizen*, banished for so long a time into ancient history, had re-appeared upon the modern horizon. They were now found proceeding from all

pens, sometimes with their old and noble meaning, but more generally with an odd mixture of the ideas of the day. It was no easy matter, in fact, especially since the time of Louis XIV., to understand,* and still more difficult to use them well. The language of liberty cannot be taught by books; it is necessary to live where it is the spoken language. And yet it may be learned incorrectly, even by those living in the midst of a people who speak it. The French who went to England a century ago for the purpose of studying it, were often those who made the worst use of it upon their return to France. Even those who had the most command of it, Montesquieu and Rousseau, how many errors they committed! How much too vague, or else too limited, were their definitions! What inaccuracies, into which our shallowest journalists could not fall! Even if everything could have been safely spoken out, there were many things which would have lacked clearness of expression, which would have been awkwardly explained; how much more natural then, that many things should be very incomprehensible, when the writers were obliged to avoid the censor's shears, or the claws of the king's servants. But the more facts were veiled, the more prodigal were these writers of words, and beneath the words Louis XV. perceived the facts.

LXV.

BANISH THOUGHT.

But he was not a man to dwell long upon one idea, particularly an unpleasant one.

"Suppose we have supper?" he said.

* If they had been thoroughly understood, would people have ventured to employ them? "The French," said Rousseau, "use familiarly

"Willingly, sire. But your Majesty must be satisfied with very simple fare. I had not hoped——"

This was not true. Before coming to the king, she had ordered, in case of need, one of those delicate little repasts with which she was in the habit of regaling him. But it must not appear too plainly that she had counted on him.

"No," said the king, "not in your apartments,—at least not to-day. We will sup here. Richelieu, go and give orders."

"Let me arrange that," she replied. "I will return in five minutes." And she was there in five minutes; in five more the table was spread. Two confidential valets charged with the arrangement of these suppers covered it with little ragouts, which had certainly no appearance of having been prepared in less than a quarter of an hour. The king had a certain mocking smile upon his lips, which the marquise observed not without uneasiness.

At length, the irresistible influence of so many tempting odors, turned this smile to a laugh. The "old man" had at length resumed his sway.

"Good," he said, seating himself, "good! The fairy has again found her wand. Say but the word, behold a supper appears! Come, what am I to take?"

"A little of everything, sire."

"Good! a little of every thing. Set down, Richelieu."

"Your Majesty permits——"

"No, I order. Long life to our little suppers! Give me wine, Richelieu." And he ate and drank and laughed and talked with school-boy gaiety.

Midnight found him still talking and laughing, eating and

this title of *citizen*, because they have no true idea of its signification: otherwise, they would be guilty, in taking it, of high-treason."

Note to the "*Contral Social.*

drinking. And when Desmarêts arrived, as we have seen, he was still eating and drinking, talking and laughing.

A quarter of an hour later, Richelieu conducted the marquise back to her apartments. And towards one o'clock, if his meditations had conducted him to that side of the park, Desmarêts might have seen a man pass enveloped in a cloak and accompanied still by Richelieu.

It was his Majesty on his way to the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*.

LXVI.

THE ANXIOUS ABBE.—TOILETTE.—RECEPTIONS.

Great had been the anxiety of the courtiers during the last few days. Without deserting the marquise they were constantly on the look out for the moment when it would be necessary to do so. They did not wish either to compromise themselves with her, or on her account with the king.

But the most uneasy of all had been our abbé of Meaux. The others could await the course of events which should direct their decision; but he knew the day and hour when he would be obliged in spite of himself to decide. Summoned by the marquise herself to the situation of which he was about to commence the duties, what figure would he present if she were disgraced, in that pulpit to which she had given him access? And the sermon, moreover? The simplest plan would have been to choose another without allusions, without compliments, a real sermon in fact, which should have no connection with these miserable affairs. But where should he get this sermon? True, he had a dozen, but none of them appeared worthy to be preached on his first appearance at court, and he could not indure the idea of throwing aside that which he had so labored,

polished and studied. Moreover, something assured him that his protectress was not permanently in disgrace, that she was to be restored to favor, and that in being the first in a public discourse to salute the re-establishment of her power, he should secure her undying gratitude. But in order that this should happen, the revolution must take place before Sunday; and how could it be hastened?

At the time of his adventure in the cathedral of Meaux, he was ignorant of the whole matter. He had a rendezvous with his protectress the next morning in the little church where she came to confess. It was then that he had been made acquainted with it, not by herself, for she had not come, but by her confidante the countess de Rion. He had set out immediately for Versailles, had seen the marquise and increased his own uneasiness.

It was accordingly with the greatest delight that he learned upon revisiting her in the evening, that the king had sent for her. He wrote immediately to his uncle to announce the good news, and to beg him to be at Versailles without fail on Sunday.

The next morning about eleven o'clock, he presented himself at Madame de Pompadour's door. Madame was at her toilette, which in our day would indicate that she was not to be seen. At that time, however, it was precisely the opposite. The hour of the toilette was the hour of reception, and of a reception which was nearly public. However slightly you might be acquainted with a lady, you were privileged to see her at this hour; you might even introduce one of your friends.

The dressing room of a fashionable woman was a sort of temple, where, as Marivaux said, "people went to burn incense upon the altar of the graces." It was accordingly the rendezvous of all those who had, or thought they had something

to lay upon this altar. Around the divinity of the place chat and move about pell-mell, young noblemen, foppish abbés, and waning beaux. She is seated before a pier-glass all gold and lace, which is supported by two of these puffing cupids, designed by Boucher, who seemed to think that they could not be made too fat and chubby. Upon a table with curved legs inlaid with ivory, gold and pearls, was spread a store of mother-of-pearl combs, silky brushes, and perfumes of every color and kind; but from the table to the smallest boxes, from the huge arm chairs to the smallest footstools, all was ungraceful from excess of splendor, all petty from excess of art. The curtains were so heavy that they looked as if sculptured in wood; the carpets so thick that one felt as if treading the thick turf of a park.

Reclining coquettishly upon her white satin couch, her fan in her hand and her little spaniel upon her knee, Madame receives the homage of the visitors without moving. She listens, and all are silent in order also to listen to the favored one whom she thus honors; she speaks, and all are hushed to hear what she will deign to remark. Most generally, however, she says but little. A smile to that one, a word to this,—no more. It is already well known that she is witty; still better known that she is beautiful. That is sufficient. In the evening she will chat gaily, but in the morning she adopts the immovability of a goddess, the laconism of an oracle.

This generally lasts for two hours, for the waiting women have orders to prolong their operations as long as Madame does not appear fatigued, and there is a sufficient number of spectators. It must be remembered that all these spectators were men. A lady of quality never was present at the public toilette of another, unless this other were a queen or a princess. It was a homage which men alone could pay, like all the other duties of gallantry, without humiliation, without consequences.

LXVII.

TOILETTE OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR.

Of all the toilette receptions of the day, that of Madame de Pompadour was naturally the most fashionable. Even ladies attended it as they did those of the princesses, though with much more eagerness. Artists and poets there jostled great lords. The great lords there saw the king, and the king found himself less ennuyé there than elsewhere.

On this particular occasion, the great question was to know whether he would make his appearance. The public inauguration of the power resumed the preceding evening was expected with anxiety. The marquise had heard from Richelieu that the king had risen this morning out of humor, irresolute, dissatisfied with his evening, and that precisely because he had been well amused,—for he seemed vexed at himself that he was no longer able to find happiness save at the expense of his conscience. She feared a sudden relapse. Her eyes wandered often and involuntarily towards the door which she hoped to see opened for the king, and more than once she encountered other glances turned in the same direction.

The appearance of the abbé de Narniers, who had been the subject of thought to more than one of those present, caused a sensation. The crowd opened before him. He came forward with a well-satisfied countenance and a joyful heart. Did he not behold his protectress in the midst of a court more numerous and more brilliant than ever? And yet he observed that she had an uneasy expression. What was the matter? he asked himself in a fright.

The duke de Richelieu, the prince de Condé, the dukes de

Coigny, de la Vallière, de Gesvres, and de la Tremouille, with some others, and a few ladies besides, had, according to custom, gathered around her in a privileged circle. This circle, upon each new arrival, opened in order to permit a salutation to Madame; but if the new comer were not one of the usual intimates, or a man of very high rank, it closed again immediately, unless Madame herself entered into conversation with him. In this case, were he but a poor poet, he was permitted to remain until the close among the intimate circle. It would have been looked upon as a want of respect towards the marquise if any disdain had been evinced towards one whom she had deigned to distinguish.

But the abbé de Narniers was too well assured of her friendship to need that she should retain him by a word. Besides, he was one of the heroes of the hour, and accordingly he installed himself without ceremony among those nearest to her. She inquired after his uncle, and then conversation was resumed.

There was, however, a lack of its usual flow and brilliancy. The pre-occupations of the day were equally discernible in the silence of some, and the chattering of others. Those who were in the habit of being witty made the greatest exertions to be so still; and wit, which flies away when sought after, had never been so hard to find.

The dedication of *Tancred* had naturally been the principal subject of conversation among the more immediate friends of the marquise. All the praises in it had been abundantly commented upon; and it cannot be denied that from the point of view adopted by the author, there was really much that was flattering which might with truth be said to Madame de Pompadour. She was born an artist. Her talents and beauty, as he had said, had been developing since her earliest childhood.

Even if she had never been connected with the throne, she had talents which would have assured her anywhere a brilliant position and a high rank. She sang in a style which drew upon her the envy of the first opera singers: she drew so well as to charm the most fastidious connoisseurs. Generalities and details, theory and practice, were all equally familiar to her. Although literature and the arts repaid with usury the protection which she bestowed upon them, it would have been evidently unjust to assert that she liked them only from interested motives. Artists and poets could praise her conscientiously, as more capable than any one else of appreciating their works. She valued their praises, but she also wished to deserve them; and to do that she had but to follow the bent of her inclinations.

In this task, which we would look upon as great and noble, if we could forget in what situation she pursued it, Madame de Pompadour was powerfully seconded by her brother, the young marquis de Marigny. Like herself, he had from his childhood loved the arts. He had afterwards studied them seriously, as well as with taste. At the age of twenty-three, he had received the post of superintendent of the royal buildings; and so well and nobly did he use it, so much talent and aptitude did he show for its duties, that it was almost forgotten that he owed it to the influence of his sister.

LXVIII.

THE YOUNG AUTHOR.

A short time after the entrance of the abbé, the privileged circle again opened to admit the marquis de Marigny. He brought with him a young man of his own age, small and

slender, with a sweet expression of countenance and a tolerably martial air.

"Madame," he said, presenting him to the marquise, "Monsieur Dorat, whom you permitted me to bring to you."

"He is most welcome. I heard with much pleasure, Monsieur, of the success of your piece—"

"Madame, I am—"

"And I hope that this first success promises many others. I have not yet read your—"

The name escaped her.

"*Zulisca*," suggested Marigny.

"Your Zulisca. But I have heard it much commended—"

"Madame,—I—"

"—— very highly commended; and the public in general are, it seems, of the same opinion with those who spoke to me in regard to it."

And Dorat, like so many others before him, was enchanted with her. How was it possible to resist such advances, made in the presence of five or six dukes, five or six ladies of distinction, and from that throne at the foot of which all prostrated themselves!

"They tell me," she resumed, "that you make charming verses."

"Madame is very indulgent."

"I am only just, Monsieur. I am anxious that you should yourself prove it to me. When you happen to have some specimens completed, come—"

"Specimens!" said Marigny. "All his verses are complete samples. I know nothing more finished, more coquettish."

"Nor *flatter*," murmured Richelieu.

"At all events, Monsieur," she resumed, "I repeat my invitation. Have you always been fond of making verses?"

"Always, Madame, even in the midst of the dust of the court of records."

"And in the midst of the powder of camps," added Marigny.

"You have been in the army, Monsieur?"

"In the mousquetaires, Madame."

"And was it the Muse who chased you from the service?"

"Other reasons."—

"Come, Dorat," said Marigny, "let us have the whole of your confession,—unless you prefer that I should make it."

"You, Monsieur? I am curious to know."——

"Love alone can make any one leave the mousquetaires. Accordingly—"

"I see the conclusion to which you are coming,—but it is incorrect, Monsieur."

"What! was it not the *beaux yeux* of—"

"Of an old aunt."

"In that case, it was the *beaux yeux de sa cassette*."*

"No, no—"

"Yes! yes!"

"No, she said that the calling of a mousquetaire was one of those in which it is the most difficult to secure one's salvation. And she could have no peace until I had abandoned Mars—"

"For the Muses—"

"And she gained but little by it, the good woman. She considers the Muses quite as heathenish as Mars."

This was one of the oddities of the day. Between license and prudery, there was no medium. Louis Racine groaned over the tragedies of his father. Gresset, author of the "*Méchant*," had just then published his *Letter on Plays*, in which he asks pardon of God and men for having written comedies. Always everything or nothing. "As soon as they

* "The fine eyes of her strong-box." Molière. (Tr.)

are persuaded to believe in God," says Duclos, "they believe in the baptism of bells."

"According to her," continued Dorat, "the success of my piece was the work of the devil."

"Wit is a devil, Monsieur."

"An amiable devil, Madame, when it shows itself in your likeness."

"Good, Dorat, good!" said Marigny. "The specimen is produced. He need give you no others, my sister."

But it would have taken a great many others to enable the marquise to resume her usual ease and gaiety. She had already made a great effort in forcing herself to sustain the conversation for these few moments. The toilet was about to finish. The king did not make his appearance. Marigny alone now talked and laughed; his sister no longer even listened to him.

Suddenly, she resumed her animation. Her eyes sparkled, and she might be seen to struggle against quite another emotion. Marigny had leaned towards her, and two or three of those nearest her, thought that they heard him say, "He will come."

LXIX.

PETITIONS, PLANS, SUGGESTIONS, APPEALS.

In order to approach her without being too much remarked, he had made a feint of turning over a number of notes and papers which were lying upon the table among the phials and boxes.

"What are you about?" she asked, laughing. "My papers—my secrets. Will you have the goodness—"

But he seized and carried off a handful.

"Your secrets? your secrets? We shall see—"

He knew very well that his sister was not the person to leave papers upon her table which she would not care to have seen. Besides, he was often accustomed in the presence of the habitual frequenters of the toilette, to open the letters of all kinds which never failed to arrive at that hour. He could perceive at a glance whether it was anything which might be read aloud, and made his comments, sometimes seriously, sometimes jestingly, upon the requests and the style of these numberless correspondents. Useful or absurd projects, ridiculous or touching complaints, great or little verses, good or bad prose, anonymous insults, or praises signed by the grandest names, these were the offerings heaped up every day at the feet of a power known to be without bounds.

Marigny went on reading those for some minutes without opening his lips.

"Well!" said the marquise, "you keep everything to yourself."

Marigny shrugged his shoulders.

"If we don't go and fight the English in their island, it will not be for want of plans of making a descent upon them."

"Another one?"

"Here are two more."

"We make them, and they execute them," said Richelieu to the marshal de Belle-Isle, the minister of war, who had stirred all France a year before, with preparations for an invasion which had not even been attempted. Since that time the makers of projects had not ceased to enlarge upon this subject, and every day brought forth some new plan. In the meantime the English battered the coasts of France with their bullets.

"And infernal machines?" asked the marquise.

"There are none to-day."

"I am glad to hear it."

"But yesterday!—"

"Ah! yes. There was one which the author said would blow up twenty ships of the line at once—"

"Provided the twenty vessels would permit it to be fastened to them."

"Doubtless. There is always the bell to be fastened on,—and that is the very thing about which these projectors do not trouble themselves."

"Ah ha!" cried Marigny. "Here is some one at all events, who does not wish to destroy his fellow creatures. A new sort of food.—wholesome. abundant, easy to cultivate, capable of being kept a year. Peste!"

"Some affair for the poor!" said Richelieu, with great contempt.

"It would be no bad thing in that case, Monsieur," said Marigny,—"but bah! how can any one believe such marvels?"

"What sort of thing is it?" asked his sister.

"A certain plant brought from Peru, nearly two hundred years ago. It produces bulbs,—a sort of truffles—"

"My dear marquis!" cried the duke de Gesvres, "do not couple the name of *truffles* with these vulgar things. Have they even a name?"

"The writer calls them *pommes de terre*, potatoes."

"*Potatoes*, be it so. The only thing wanting is that he should send a specimen to Madame,—or a bouquet of the flowers of this interesting plant!"

The old duke thought this a good joke. What would he have said if he had seen a king of France one fine day with a bouquet of these very flowers. But Parmentier, the advo-

cate,—the *inventor* as he was called, of the potatoe, had still to struggle for twenty years against the prejudices of the learned and the reluctance of the ignorant.

So they ridiculed it very gaily. Marigny alone did not appear to think that it was the notion of a madman.

As he opened another folded paper, astonishment and pity were suddenly depicted upon his countenance. Without a word he handed his sister a note written with blood. There was a single line and a name.

"Madame,—To-day, July 21st 1760, at noon, I shall have suffered for one hundred thousand hours.

"From my cell in the Bastile. Latude."

She cast her eyes over it carelessly.

"It is the twentieth at least," she said.

And the conversation was recommenced.

He insisted. "One hundred thousand hours, my sister!"

But he read in her eyes that it was in vain, and that there was no pardon for any one who had been so unhappy as to offend her.

LXX.

MARIGNY.—THE KING AND HIS ARCHITECT.—GREAT PLANS.

At length the king arrived,—the king whom she had awaited with such restless impatience. He entered, as she had said in her letter to the pope, "by the reception room;" and outside, on the parquet of the antechamber, resounded the halberts of the Swiss guards. It was plain that he came as king. Nothing was wanting to the triumph of his mistress.

What had passed between him and Marigny, which enabled the latter to say, "He is coming?"

Marigny had not lost sight of him since the morning. He feared, not without reason, that the night might have brought its counsel, and at all events, counsel might make its appearance at any moment in the shape of Father Desmarèts.

He and his friends, accordingly, kept up a strict watch around the king's apartments. Although he preferred meeting him *accidentally*, he was prepared in case no opportunity should offer itself, to enter and go directly to his Majesty, for no one, not even excepting Richelieu, had ever attained so high a place as he in the good graces of the king. When his sister first brought him to court, he was still a youth, almost a child, but a child of sparkling wit, and possessed withal of a *naïveté*, and a frankness, which enchanted the king. A bourgeois by birth, he laughed at his titles, and played with them as with brilliant toys which he knew could add nothing to his merit. Created marquis de Marigny, after having been for some time marquis de Vandières, he said: "The fishwomen have always called me the marquis *d'Avant-Hier*, (of day before yesterday,) you will see that they will now call me the marquis *des Mariniers*, (of mariners,) which is very natural, since I was born a *Poisson*,* (fish.)" And the king laughed heartily, while the courtiers wondered that any one could be so little puffed up by such an enviable position. However, they were but the more assidious in their attentions to him. "I cannot drop my handkerchief," he wrote to a friend, "that twenty *cordons bleus*† do not dispute for the honor of picking it up." As for the king, he felt an emotion almost of gratitude towards his young superintendent. He owed to him the few moments he had ever known of those fresh and innocent enjoyments which rarely survive childhood or early youth, and which the king

* Poisson was in fact the family name.

† Decoration of the order of Knights of the Holy Ghost (Tr.)

had never experienced. The king had often called him his little brother, and this little brother had retained as a man, all the rights of a loved and petted younger brother.

We do not know how great his influence may have been, through his sister, upon State affairs, but he never appeared to desire for himself anything besides being the centre of the arts, and the protector of the artists. Notwithstanding the favor which he enjoyed, he was not a *favorite*, in the sense which this word conveyed in the time of some of the more or less indolent kings. His influence was rarely exerted beyond the limits of his calling. If he did not satisfy everybody, still no one upon the whole caused less dissatisfaction than he.

Of course we cannot expect him to have had sentiments and principles which did not belong to the period. When the greatest lords considered themselves honored with the friendship of the king's mistress, why should he have blushed at being her brother? He felt accordingly not the slightest shame or embarassment in regard to it. If he had been the queen's brother, or the first prince of the blood, he could not have been more perfectly at his ease.

Ever since morning he had been on the watch.

The king left his apartments. It was the hour of the toilette, and Marigny doubted not that the king would proceed thither. His dismay was great, accordingly, when he saw him go down the staircase which conducted to the grand terrace, and direct his steps towards the gardens. But as this was at the same time the best possible opportunity for meeting him accidentally, he hastily took a cross alley, and the king found him giving orders near one of the basins which was under repair. He even had in his hand, in the most business-like manner, a long wooden measure, and a large roll of paper. His

back was turned, and he appeared entirely absorbed by his occupation.

Two or three courtiers who accompanied the king, stopped at some distance. A man, a shadow had appeared here and there through the branches of the trees. The courtiers had pointed him out to each other silently. The king had not seen, or had not chosen to see him.

"Good day, Marigny," said the king.

"Good day— Ah! sire, excuse me! Who could have imagined that it was your Majesty?"

"Always at work?"

"Your Majesty well knows that it is my greatest happiness to be at work."

"What are you about there? You spoke to me of some pipe to be mended."

"But these tritons were badly placed. I profited by the opportunity to arrange them more to my taste. Do they not look much better now?"

"Perhaps they do. It is a lucky thing, at all events, that the château is heavier than a triton."

"Why, sire?"

"Because otherwise I should find it upside down some fine morning."

"Patience. God gives us life—and money,—and we turn these into many other things for you."

"Here is something which is not only turned, but quite new, if I am not mistaken. What is there to be upon these two stones?"

"Two vases,—masterpieces, which I have ordered from Lemoyne and Bouchardon."

"You have a particular attachment for this basin, then, since you wish to ruin me in adorning it?"

"A particular attachment? Not more than for the others."

"So you are attached to them all?"

"So be it. Yes, your Majesty is right, I *am* particularly fond of this one."

"I understand.—Well, she is very pretty, in truth."

"Who?"

"This nymph of Coysevox who is admiring herself in the water."

"Oh, she is of marble, sire."

"Then why your predilection for this basin?"

"Because I once fished a poet out of it."

"Ah! yes, you told me. It was Sedaine, was it not?"

"Exactly. Sedaine, the restorer of the comic opera, one of the glories of your reign, sire, no offense to the envious. It was here that I surprised him pencilling verses, and that he confessed to me his plan of abandoning the trowel for the pen."

"And you encouraged him, I suppose?"

"I should have been far from doing so, what would Boileau have said?

'*Remain* a mason, friend, if this be now your trade,'

I said to him. But he plead his cause like Sophocles; he read me his first piece—"

"What was it?"

"'*Le Diable a quatre*.'"*

"Has he written anything on the trade?"

"Two pieces, sire."

"What are their names?"

"One is '*The Gardener and his Master*;' Philidor set it to

* The devil to pay.

music. The other is '*The King and the Farmer*,'—the music by Monsigny, I think."

The king had resumed his walk. Marigny laid down his measure, and still conversing, accompanied him.

The courtiers followed at some distance. The shadow had again made its appearance at the turn of one of the avenues.

"What have you there?" asked the king.

He pointed to the great roll of paper which Marigny had kept in his hand.

"A plan, sire."

"A basin?"

"No; a sewer which I wish to try and clean."

Marigny unrolled his paper. The king cast a glance over it, and began to laugh.

"Is that your sewer?"

"Yes, sire. Your good city of Paris, arranged, purified—"

"But, good heavens! what is all this? One can hardly recognize Paris. Have you perhaps three hundred millions to advance me in order to pay for this overturning? Ah! Notre-Dame is in the old place, eh?"

"Yes; but the place de Parvis is twice its present size. By pulling down a few houses, I make a commodious, almost a handsome approach to your cathedral, and at the same time to the Hotel-Dieu, See—"

"Let us sit down."

It was at the entrance of a grove. The steps of a man were heard, precipitately retreating on the opposite side.

They went in. Marigny spread his plan upon a marble table, broke off a little branch, trimmed off its leaves, and remained standing beside the king, pointing out the different places with his impromptu wand.

"You see," he continued, "this is the Palace of Justice; but

it is no longer smothered in its old island. I pull down fifty houses, and make you there, on the river bank, opposite the Châtelet, a charming promenade."

"What is this point in the middle?"

"The statue of the king."

"Another? I shall see no one but myself after awhile. They say that the Parisians think they already have too much of me. This statue—"

"Is not for the Parisians, sire. I wish that the gentlemen of the Parliament shall remember as they are going to the Palace, that there is a king in France, which fact they occasionally forget, as your Majesty knows. But, to proceed. These two magnificent lines of—"

"Marigny, where will you get the money?"

"Ah! sire, that is a question which Louis XIV. would never have asked!"

"If he had asked it sometimes, I should not be obliged to do so now."

"Well, I have arranged everything. Soufflot has made his calculations. He asks twenty years—"

"Thirty, if he likes. That we can promise him, more easily than anything else."

"And only fifteen hundred thousand livres outlay every year."

"You are jesting, Marigny. What can be done with fifteen hundred thousand livres a year? I never had a foot of wall built, which did not cost two or three times as much as the first calculation. Witness this pipe to be mended, which, thanks to you, is going to cost me perhaps two thousand livres—"

"Five thousand, sire, the two vases included."

"You see?'

"I see that you will have encouraged two great artists in

their labors, for half the sum which you sometimes give a great lord for doing nothing, or doing mischief. Well, sire, let us say no more of this unlucky basin. I will pay for it if necessary. But this—this is your capital; this is the great stone page upon which you have to engrave your name. It is ten years since I have been studying out this plan. Ten years, did I say? I was still a child and could not possibly suspect that I should ever have anything to do with these things, when my imagination already bounded at the thought of the marvels which might be made to arise from this old chaos of a Paris. Oh for a king, I sighed, a king who would but listen to me! And here I am with a king,—but a king who cheapens, who objects. A king who might rebuild Paris, and who regards it as might a bourgeois of the Rue St. Denis, to whom one might speak of repairing his house! 'The calculation is not correct. The expense will be double, triple the sum.' Well,—if it should be quadruple, if Soufflot should ask not thirty, but an hundred, an hundred and sixty millions,—I say that you ought to accept, and I say that the battle of Fontenoy will be sooner forgotten than a good fountain with which you provided the poor people of a little alley in Paris!—"

His voice faltered; the tears came into his eyes. His sister, his fears, the secret object with which he had sought this interview,—all were forgotten. He had begun by acting a part, and now his whole soul was involuntarily poured forth in his words.

"Marigny," said the king, "you have a noble heart. Why did I not know you twenty years sooner! With half of the money which I have spent,—Heaven knows how,—you would have made me achieve great things. But I am old,—I am worn out,—and the State is still more worn out than I am. Every thing alarms me. But go on, go on. Come, take your

branch,"—he had thrown it away;—"you were talking, I think, of these two lines."

"Well, these two lines, sire, are two streets, which shall have few,—perhaps no equals in the world. They begin, as you see, at the colonnade of the Louvre. One goes straight to the arsenal, the other to the Bastille. On their way, they will overturn, and cut through hundreds of houses, but it will be in order to carry air, light, cleanliness, and life into this immense labyrinth. Follow the first. Here you arrive at the Hôtel-de-Ville,—but twice its present size. It reaches to the quay,—it displays parallel with Notre-Dame a façade of which Philibert de Lorme need not be ashamed. Now retrace your steps a little. See this immense oblong square; it is the greatest palace ever built by man. It is your Louvre at length embracing the Tuileries with its two gigantic arms; and your Carrousel,—for I consent to let this name remain,—but cleared up,—such as it should have been an hundred years ago, such as I should have commanded it to be made, if I had been king, the first day of my reign! In these immense galleries I put the Royal Library, the Museum, the Medals, the Antiques. I lodge the Artists there. I place there the exhibitions of painting, sculpture, industry, and what not! And oh your place too will be here, my king! And there shall not be an art in Europe, nor a beautiful thing in France, which you may not lodge under your roof! Return to the quay. You see this bridge which connects the Louvre with the Palace Mazarin? From that you reach the Luxembourg in a straight line. We are there. Now, turn to the left. Go on, to Sainte-Geneviève;—the old church is no longer there. In its place rises the largest and loftiest of the churches of Paris. Three hundred and fifty feet long, two hundred and fifty broad, and with

a dome which would crush those of Val-de-Grâce, and the Invalides. Here it is.—Look—"

And rapidly unrolling another paper, he spread it before the king.

"Look, sire, look! There are twenty of these beautiful columns in the portico; they are nearly six feet in diameter, nearly sixty in height. Enter. See, here are more columns,—and here more, and here,—they are not so gigantic, but there are more than an hundred of them! Raise your eyes. You are beneath the dome. You are bewildered by the misty, huge expanse. Ascend. You reach the gallery which surrounds it. Ascend higher; you are in the second cupola. Ascend still higher;—you are on top of the dome. You seem to hover over Paris. Its belfries, its towers are all beneath your feet. And even at the distance of many leagues can be perceived this high crown which you have placed on the brow of the old city. And the traveller asks who built this colossus. And he is told. 'It is the king, Louis XV.'"

"Build!" cried the king, "build, Marigny! Tell Soufflot to begin, to make haste. The money you shall have. The time I want you to shorten by half. I do not wish to die before having ascended your dome. I will—"

"And he is told," continued Marigny, as if talking to himself,—"he is told, 'It is king Louis XV.'—yes, king Louis XV. But who inspired the king, Louis XV., with the idea of erecting these works which will immortalize his name? Who caused him to build the Military School, in order that Louis XIV. should no longer monopolize all praises for his hospital for invalid soldiers? Who taught him to love what is beautiful and great? Who encouraged him?—"

"You, Marigny,—I know it well,—you."

Marigny continued, but in a still lower voice, as if he had

been alone: "Who, in short, was the originator of these magnificent things? It was not his courtiers,—not his ministers,—it was not even he who brought the plans to him;—it was a woman,—a woman who was his good genius, and whom he sacrificed to the demands of bigots!"

At this unexpected conclusion, the king abruptly raised his head. Astonishment, gratitude and anger, were strangely mingled in his glance. As for Marigny, he silently rolled up his plans.

"You are going away?" said the king.

"With your Majesty's permission."

"And where are you going to?"

"To my sister."

"What to do there?"

"To see if the courtiers are more faithful than the king."

"Well, then! go, and expect the king presently."

"May I really, sire?"

"Go."

He was ashamed of his weakness, and strove to conceal it as well as he could beneath an abrupt tone. But Marigny, who knew him thoroughly, was but the more assured of his victory when he heard this rude tone. A gracious promise might have been a feint; a fit of ill-humor proved that Louis XV. felt himself bound.

Marigny had but one apprehension. He thought of the shadow which had been seen wandering through the bushes.

His joy was great, accordingly, when his sentinels informed him that it had returned to the château.

The shadow was Desmarèts. He too had endeavored to meet the king accidentally. The game was once more lost.

LXXI.

THE KING'S ARRIVAL.—VOLTAIRE'S DEDICATION AGAIN.—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NOBILITY OF FRANCE.

Prepared in time by her brother, Madame de Pompadour betrayed neither surprise nor joy upon the entrance of the king. She only rose and received him as usual, with that courtly grace which she knew so perfectly how to display. She asked his permission, as customary, to continue her toilette. This was the only distinction which was obtained by a king or prince of the blood at the toilette of a lady. He was supposed to make his appearance there as a man, and not as a prince, and had no right to any homage from the person to whom he came to pay his own. Accordingly, the politeness of the lady never went so far as to lead her to excuse herself for the undress in which he found her. It was not one of the least peculiarities of the time to see, seated in public, before a woman with her hair half arranged, him before whom the highest magistrates never ventured to appear save in full dress, and invested with the insignia of office.

At first there was a profound silence; then, as soon as the king had exchanged a few common-place words with her, the conversation was re-commenced. Custom allowed it, and besides it would not do to seem to be spying out what passed between them. Most commonly the conversation remained general among the eight or ten courtiers who formed the more intimate circle. The king took part in it like the others; but when he was present, the marquise also took more part in it. She addressed herself, in speaking, to him, unless she had to reply directly to a question from some other speaker.

In the meanwhile, Marigny still held in his hand the note of the prisoner.

"What are you reading there?" asked the king.

"Nothing," said the marquise,—"a memorial."

She took it, and threw it carelessly upon the table.

"Let us see," said the king. "Ah! Latude? One hundred thousand hours! Already? Yes, so it is. One hundred thousand hours make about—four thousand—four thousand two hundred days. Eleven years and a little more."

And the courtiers admired the rapidity with which the king made this calculation.

But not a word of the prisoner. Latude had only two hundred and fifty thousand hours longer to suffer.*

The conversation, until his arrival, as we said before, had turned upon the famous dedication. As no one could guess what had taken place on the preceding evening, nor the ill-humor into which certain portions had thrown the king, the subject was continued, to the great vexation of the two witnesses of the other scene. Richelieu wished to change the conversation; but the count de Lauraguais, who chanced to have the book in his hand, was not the man to let such a subject drop quietly. Besides his liking for Voltaire, he was one of the most zealous patrons of the dramatic art in France. It was owing to his efforts that spectators were no longer allowed to take their seats upon the stage. He had devoted a considerable sum to the indemnification of the actors for the suppression of these places, which commanded very high prices. The young nobility looked upon them, besides, as one of their inalienable privileges, and it had been necessary for Voltaire to decide them to make this sacrifice required by the merest common sense.

* It is known that he was not liberated until 1784.

"In truth," he said, "I never read anything finer than the close."

"The close of what?" asked the king.

"Of the dedication to Madame—"

"Ah!"

He understood, from the tone of this *ah!* that the thing was not particularly to the king's taste. But it was too late to retreat.

"Your Majesty has read it?"

"Not the close."

"Will your Majesty permit me to read it aloud?"

"Read it."

"—— 'Even in our provinces are to be seen superb theatres, as circuses were to be seen in all the Roman provinces; an undeniable proof of the taste which yet exists among us, and of our resources under the most difficult circumstances. It is in vain that many of our countrymen endeavor to establish as a fact, that we are on the decline in everything. I am not of the opinion of those who, upon coming from the play, go to a delicious supper, and in the midst of luxury and pleasure assert that all is lost'—"

"What!" said the king, with a feigned amazement which he knew very well how to make very malicious;—"are there people in France who believe that all is lost?"

Although he was well known to be among the number of these, such a question, so directly asked, might well put a courtier out of countenance.

"Sire—" stammered the count.

And his eyes wandered from the king to the book, as if asking permission to go on without answering.

"Ah! ha!" resumed the king; "people who think that all is lost! Well,—we will console ourselves, for here is Monsieur de Voltaire who condescends to hold another opinion."

The count hastened to take these last words as a signal that he might go on. He resumed:

"'I am living quite near a provincial city, as populous as modern Rome, and much more wealthy,—giving employment to more than forty thousand persons,—which has just built the handsomest hospital and the finest theatre in the kingdom. Say honestly, could all these things be, if our land produced nothing but thistles?'—"

"Weather-cock!—" murmured the king.

"Did you speak, sire?" asked the marquise.

"He sets up as an optimist for the time being, with just as much reason and sincerity, as he uses when he chooses to pull us to pieces, or when he writes to his king of Prussia. One day, because he came across some ragged peasants, he accuses us of sucking the very blood of the people, and at another time, because Lyons builds a theatre, and his pieces are played in it, behold everything is going on in the best possible way in this best of worlds!"

"Listen, sire, to the rest. Here we have something in the patriarchal style."

The count felt that he must pacify the king by laughing himself a little, at the whims of the patriarch. He read on; and this same production which would unanimously have been pronounced sublime, if the king had appeared at all inclined to like it, was listened to with satirical shrugs. The reader himself affected a certain emphasis, which was not far from being a parody.

"'I have chosen for my dwelling one of the least fertile regions of France. And yet nothing is wanting here. The country is adorned with houses which would formerly have been called beautiful. Those of the poor who will labor, here cease to be poor; this little province has become a smiling

garden. It is better assuredly to improve one's estate, than to stay in Paris, and complain of its barrenness.'"

"Ah! ha!" interrupted the king, "that is not bad. What is the matter with you, Monsieur de Lauraguais, that you wish to spoil this last part for me, after having read the other with such unction? Yes, yes. It is certainly infinitely better for a man to live on his estate and improve it, than to stay in Paris —or at Versailles—and grumble about its worthlessness. I suspect strongly,—or rather I am perfectly sure that everything your patriarch has said there, is purely from a spirit of contradiction. If my nobility liked to plant cabbages, *he* would not plant any, and would be the first to jeer and laugh at them. But the advice is good, nevertheless."

"And your Majesty repeats this advice to us?" said Richelieu. "That is also most patriarchal. I confess, however, that I find it difficult to picture to myself a—"

"A Richelieu, eh?"

"Well, say a Richelieu— A Richelieu planting— I dare not go on in the presence of Madame"

"Charlemagne used to sell his eggs."

"O sire, must we return to the days when kings were shepherds?"

"Seriously, gentlemen, if each nobleman troubled his head a little more about the improvement of his estates, we should not be in the condition in which we now are—"

"Your Majesty forgets one point."

"What?"

"That at the same time he must occupy himself less in making away with his revenues."

"And do *you* say that Richelieu? Very good. But you do not always say as much. If I am to believe a certain transaction—"

"With my grandson, I will wager."

"Exactly. Is the story a fable?"

"Not at all. I should be very sorry if it were. Fancy, Madame, this year, on the first of January, I present my grandson with fifty louis as a holiday gift. Three months afterwards I visit him in his college, and ask him in the course of conversation, what he had done with the money. Thereupon the rogue assumes a triumphant air, opens his armoire, and places in my hand—what? My fifty louis. He had not touched them; he had not even opened the purse. Without saying a word I opened the window, and threw the purse out to a street sweeper, calling to him—'See, my lad, there is what Monsieur le comte de Chinon gives you for a new year's present.' Then coming back to my embryo Harpagon, I said to him, 'learn, my friend, that when one who has the honor to be called the count de Chinon, and expects one day to be the duke de Richelieu, he is not to keep fifty louis for three months without touching them.'"

"That is a lesson," said the king, "by which he may profit better than you wish, some ten years hence."

"It is possible."

"However, since you have something with which to be magnificent, be so. But for one ox which is large without swelling itself up,—although not without eating—"

Richelieu felt the stroke. The king was aware of his pillaging during the campaign in Hanover, and liked to remind him of it.

"For *one* ox, as I said," continued the king, "how many frogs there are who swell themselves up with all their might! My ancestor Henry IV. laughed at those whom he saw with 'their mills and their forests on their backs.' I know many people who would be glad enough to have got no farther than their

mills and forests. It is their châteaux, their estates which I see them wearing in the form of laces and braidings. What are we coming to, gentlemen, what are we coming to?"

It was not the first time that he had been heard to criticise or satirize the prodigalities of the nobility, but as he was himself, upon the whole, the most prodigal, and the most deeply in debt of all the gentlemen in France, it was natural that his remarks should not produce much effect. We shall return to the singularity of this state of things.

They endeavored to proceed jestingly with the conversation, which the king had commenced with a seriousness which did not entirely exclude pleasantry, but this time the feeling of seriousness predominated in his mind. In spite of all that was said he remained thoughtful. He seemed unconscious of what was passing around him. He had been led, while jesting, to the brink of one of the abysses towards which he felt his kingdom hastening. His impressions of the evening before and of this morning, were vaguely mingled with those of this terrifying picture. Sadness was for him at the bottom of everything. He did not seek it,—but it seemed to follow him.

The toilette finished, he rose, took leave of the marquise, and returned to his apartments.

LXXII.

RISING HOPES.

Madame de Pompadour allowed every one to go out, excepting her brother and the abbé.

The king had come. That was a great deal. But he had gone away in a state of mind which the marquise had always

dreaded. She ruled only by causing him to banish all thought. What would she have to expect if he should finally refuse to do this?

It was accordingly somewhat gloomily that she, with her brother and the abbé de Narniers, began to recapitulate the events of the past week. After many reflections, more or less disquieting or re-assuring, she said to the abbé:

"I have been thinking a good deal of your sermon for to-morrow. Have you committed it to memory as you showed it to me?"

"Yes, Madame."

"It is very bold. If the king had not come to-day to my toilette, you would have been obliged to throw it aside."

The abbé shuddered to think what a narrow escape he had had.

"And indeed," she continued, "I do not know whether certain passages will not appear rather forcible."

The abbé shuddered again, for he had made them still more forcible. The sermon which he had read to his protectress, some weeks before, was much less scandalous than that which Bridaine had heard at Meaux. He trembled lest she should insist upon his re-writing it.

"Suppose we read it once more together?" she resumed.

"I fear,—it might fatigue you. Rely upon me."

"Very well. To-morrow, then. But do not be uneasy if you do not see me in the chapel."

"What! do you not intend to come?"

"I have not decided. It will perhaps be better, even for your interests, that I should not be there. The king will be more at his ease."

"Act, then, for the best. Adieu, Madame."

"Adieu,—future bishop of Meaux."

"Madame—"

"Adieu, future archbishop of—let us see,—of what?"

"Madame—"

"A red hat would become him marvellously well, would it not, Marigny?"

And after having delicately reminded him, in jesting, what she would be able to do for him if she remained sovereign,* she extended to him her hand, which the poor abbé kissed in a transport of respect.

LXXIII.

THE ROYAL CHAPEL OF VERSAILLES.—LOUIS XV. AND HIS CHILDREN.

And so the next day, which was Sunday, the chapel was crowded. We have elsewhere described the royal chapel.† As it was in 1675, we still see it in 1760; and although Louis XV. was far from being so profoundly worshipped there as his predecessor, still the king, and the king more than anything else, was always the object sought in the royal chapel. As in the time of Louis XIV., the amateurs of serious devotion went elsewhere to perform theirs.

The events of the week, the appearance of a new preacher, and the general expectation that his sermon would be upon a peculiar subject, all contributed to fill Versailles. Paris and the château had sent their complement of courtiers. The king's levee had been attended by all who were able to appear in his chamber. He had been observed to look more annoyed

* She had procured a cardinal's hat for the abbé de Bernis, one of her dependants.

† In the "Preacher and the King," xxv. chapter.

and wearied than usual, and it was evident that this crowd displeased him.

The levee was short, and all those whose business did not retain them near the king went immediately to the chapel.

A large number of ladies was already there. News and comments circulated, as usual, with great rapidity. The queen, her two daughters, and the dauphiness, had set off for Paris: they were going to perform their devotions with the ladies of the Sacred Heart. Although it was not the first time they had done so, it was of course attributed to the peculiar circumstances, and perhaps with some reason. The dauphin had gone to Sens some days before. He loved the stillness of that city, and desired to be buried there. He feared contact, even for his remains, with the vices which slept at Saint-Denis.

Louis XV., on his part, had a dread of the virtues of his family. Even if the dauphin retreated to Sens, and the queen to Paris, still what was their whole life but a continual reproach to the looseness of his own? In vain did they avoid communing in public; it was well enough known that they did commune, and that communion was forbidden the king. And yet, as appearances are always something, particularly in a court, Louis XV. was more at his ease when he knew that they were at a distance from him; so that he never complained of their absence. Of the two annoyances, he willingly chose the least.

Moreover, he did not love his son, and never had done so. There could be no sympathy between them; their sentiments in regard to everything were not more different than their habits. The piety of the dauphin, although very gentle, was often somewhat exaggerated. He took no part in politics, and even abstained from talking of them; but it was well known

that he thought none the less about them for that. He was not on good terms with the king's friends, particularly with Richelieu, nor with the duke de Choiseul, nor, above all, with the marquise, who might expect to be dismissed, imprisoned perhaps, so soon as he should become king. What a gesture had escaped him when he bestowed upon her the embrace exacted by etiquette, the day when she was raised to the rank of duchess! But that for which the king, without being conscious of it, found it most difficult to pardon the dauphin, was that he was his successor. He did not like to have any one before his eyes who was to be a gainer by his death. He imagined that this idea was continually present in his son's mind. Accordingly, when some favor was requested of him for one of the dauphin's friends, he replied, "Let him wait!"

We have already mentioned his conduct to his daughters. He had, however, made it a rule to see them every day; but we know, from the Memoirs of Madame Campan, their reader, how he acquitted himself of this task. "Every morning," she says, "he descended by a private staircase into the apartment of Madame Adelaide. He immediately rang a bell, which informed Madame Victoire of the king's visit; and Madame Victoire, rising to go to her sister's apartment, rang for Madame Sophie, who in her turn rang for Madame Louise. The latter, small and deformed, crossed a great many rooms at full speed, and often, in spite of her haste, she only arrived in time to embrace her father, who set off immediately for his day's hunting."

"Every evening at six," Madame Campan continues, "the ladies suspended their reading, in order to go to the king. This visit was called the king's *unbooting*, and was accompanied by a kind of etiquette. The princesses put on an enormous hoop, which supported a petticoat loaded with gold

or embroidery. They fastened around the waist a long train, and concealed the carelessness of the remainder of their dress beneath a large cloak of black taffetas, which covered them up to the chin. The chevaliers of honor, the ladies, the pages, the squires, and ushers carrying large torches, accompanied them to the king. In an instant the whole palace, usually so solitary, was in a commotion. The king kissed the brow of each princess; and the visit was so short, that the suspended reading was often re-commenced within a quarter of an hour. The princesses returned to their apartments, untied the fastenings of their skirts and trains, resumed their tapestry work, and I my book."

As for the princes of the blood, other reasons estranged him from them, or at least prevented him from associating intimately with them. He had been very friendly with the prince de Conti; but the boldness of the latter had changed the friendship into coldness. The prince de Condé was one of the favorite's courtiers; but he was only twenty-five years old, and could therefore be no friend for Louis XV. The count d'Eu and the duke de Penthièvre, sole descendants of the duke du Maine and the count de Toulouse, held themselves much aloof. As for the duke d'Orleans, he too was an heir. He was liked at court, and in favor with the marquise; but the nearer he was to the throne, the more the king feared, without knowing exactly why, that he would draw still nearer. Louis XV. was not usually fond of being surrounded by people whose position and rights did not depend upon him. He liked to be king, but without giving himself any trouble to be so, and he disliked being obliged to reign among those whom birth had made almost his equals.

LXXIV.

THE GALLERY LEADING TO THE CHAPEL.

A very ancient custom, become a law in the time of Louis XIV, had fixed the moment of the king's setting out for the chapel, as that time when he might be approached without previous formalities. It had been agreed that the time when he was about to humble himself before God should also be that when men should be allowed to be his brethren, to see him without ceremony, and to speak with him as with a simple mortal. Then another, and the greatest reason for it was that they were forced to be short, and that the king pressed by time, might always have an excuse for being so too.

It was therefore not really an audience. The king accompanied by the captain of the guards and a few noblemen, slowly passed through one of the galleries of the chateau. He must be waited for here. He never seated himself to listen; frequently he even continued to walk on. The petitioner was in that case permitted to walk beside him, continuing to speak with him, but only until some one else should present himself. Thereupon the king paused, and the first speaker hastened to finish. If too many presented themselves at one time, the king by a word or gesture expressed his regret at not being able to listen to them all, and the unsuccessful must put off their communications until another day.

It was rare for any petitioners to present themselves on a Sunday, but the way was lined with crowds of the inquisitive. He was accustomed on that day, to receive the somewhat awkward salutations of the honest citizens, who came to let their good wives have a glance at the court. It amused him

to pass through these people, and he continued the amusement at dinner, which was also public on Sunday. As he excelled in breaking the shell of an egg by means of a dexterous back stroke of his fork, he never failed to eat eggs at his public dinner, and was almost flattered by the admiration of the clowns for this pitiful bit of adroitness.

However, the number of gazers was smaller year by year. The *bourgeois*, without hating the Jesuits, was devoted to the parliament; without having gone so far as to hate the king, he began to look very black at him. Had he not also hummed in his back-shop more than one of the half seditious verses on the exile of Monsieur de Chauvelin? As for the questions still at issue between the magistracy and royalty, he confessed that he did not understand much about them; but he confided in **Messieurs* of the Parliament,—and wherever *Messieurs* said no, he felt himself obliged to slouch his hat and cry "No!" Accordingly, he no longer cared so much to go to Versailles in order to stare at the royal mouth, which said, or was made to say, in reply to the *no* of the parliament, "Take me these people to Mont Saint-Michel!"

LXXV.

THE PRIEST AND THE HUGUENOT.

Louis XV. had reached the middle of the gallery, when two hands were extended towards him. Two men presented one a letter, the other a sealed paper.

Upon mutually perceiving each other, for they did not appear to have done so before, these two men both looked equally

* The members of the Parliaments, as a body, were spoken of familiarly as *Messieurs;* Gentlemen.—[Tr.]

surprised. When the king had passed on, carrying the two petitions with him, they were seen to accost each other with a certain eagerness;

"The third meeting," exclaimed one.

"You see," replied the other, "that a rendezvous would have been superfluous."

"But here, at Versailles!—You!—"

"Do you think that I am in more danger here than at Nimes?"

"And if you were discovered—!"

"Do not say if. The address which I have just presented to the king—"

"Well, what?"

"It is signed."

"Then fly, for God's sake, fly, before he has looked at it!—"

"Fly? If I had come here to do that, I might as well have staid away. Besides, I have demanded an audience of the king. So he can have me whenever he will. Are you coming to the chapel?"

"Yes, but are you going,—you?"

"I am going. Is it not to-day that our abbé is to preach?"

"Without doubt. But the mass?"

"I shall hear the mass."

"And you will kneel?"

"God forbid! But I shall not be seen."

"Where shall you sit, then?"

"In one of the private galleries. And you?"

"Wherever I can."

Rabaut found some one at the entrance of the chapel, who appeared to be waiting for him. He followed him into a neighboring corridor, and Bridaine mingled with the crowd.

LXXVI.

THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER.—HIGH MASS.

The king was seated, and the mass was about to begin. The duke de Richelieu, behind him, still held in his hand the two papers presented in the gallery, for the king, as was the custom, had only held them a moment, and then handed them to him. The duke, as first gentleman to the king, had the right to open all that was addressed to him.

"However, this was a right which Richelieu did not usually display any great eagerness to exercise. The petitions which were not supported by powerful recommendations, had often long to wait before he took the trouble to read them, and still longer before he reported them to the king. The king, on his side, troubled himself little about what became of them, or what the petitioners might think of the delay.

The two just received might have shared the common fate, if Richelieu chancing to cast his eyes upon one of the envelopes, had not seen these words; "To be read immediately." His first impulse was to pronounce the petitioner very bold and very ill mannered. Then he thrust the paper into his pocket, and if there had been a fire near him we will not answer for it that he would not have thrown it in immediately. He changed his mind however. This letter may be of great importance, he thought. So he took it out again, read it and then looked greatly embarrassed. He was perceived to lean over towards the duke de Gesvres, whisper a few words, and hand him the paper. The duke after reading it rapidly returned it, pointing to the king. His opinion evidently was that it should immediately be given to him; and Richelieu accordingly, stretching

his hand over the back of the king's arm-chair laid it, open, before his eyes. All this passed in two or three minutes, and the mass had not yet commenced. The king began to read, making a sign that there should be a moment's delay.

There was a sudden movement of curiosity scarcely restrained by his presence, and extending in an instant to the remotest corners of the chapel. All eyes were upon the king, and were only withdrawn from his face to question that of Richelieu; but the duke was too near the king to be able to say anything to any one, even in a low voice, so profound was the silence. In front, upon the seat of the bishops, was an old prelate, whose agitation was visible to his neighbors. Richelieu had been seen to intimate to him by a sign that he was interested in the affair.

In the meantime the king continued to read. He had soon reached the close of the letter, then he had begun to read it again more slowly. He was perceived to pause at certain passages with an air of surprise and embarrassment. At length, as if he had suddenly formed a resolution, he abruptly folded the letter, put it into his pocket, and give the signal for the service to begin.

During the mass he appeared sometimes devout, and then again absent and agitated. Towards the close he became calmer, but during the performance of the orchestra, Richelieu had spoken to the duke de Gesvres, and some words of their conversation had circulated from seat to seat. There was no longer any doubt; it was something about the sermon.

And in fact the king rose as soon as the mass was ended. In an instant all rose and he went out as he had entered, between the duke de Richelieu and the captain of his guards.

LXXVII.

THE ABBÉ'S UNEASINESS.—THE LETTER.—TOTAL DISCOMFITURE.

Upon the movement which followed his departure, a man might have been seen in the vestry, who until then seated, quickly rose, ran to the door, listened, though without opening it, and listened again, in the most violent agitation.

This man was the abbé de Narniers. He had heard the conclusion of the mass, and only awaited the beadle who was to conduct him to the pulpit. What was the meaning of this noise? He could understand nothing—nothing but what he trembled to understand, namely, that the king had left, for it was impossible to suppose that such a noise could take place while he was present.

His uncertainty was not of long duration. The bishop of Meaux entered, in a state of indescribable perturbation.

"All is lost!" he cried, as he dropped upon the seat which the abbé had just left.

The abbé grew pale. His limbs trembled beneath him. He had not even strength enough to ask an explanation.

"All is lost," repeated his uncle; "the king received a letter during the mass—"

"From whom?"

"How should I know? And he has gone away—"

"But it is some treachery! I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole court."

"Do not let them have time to talk. Make haste—"

"Make haste!—To do what?"

"Why to preach!"

"To preach? I? Why what is the sense of the sermon if the king is not there?"

"You must change—"

"In the state I am in!—I should stumble at the first word."

"Good heavens!—You will give it up?"

"Listen. There is still one chance. It is that you should hasten after the king."

"I!"

"You— And if you love your nephew you will do it. You will ask him how I have deserved this insult,—in what I have— But go, go—he will come back—"

"He will not come back. And suppose he should, what are you thinking of? I to run after him, to bring him back! Then, truly, you would be laughed at,—I should be laughed at."

"Time presses.—The noise increases.—Will you save me? yes or no."

"But—"

"Will you?—Well,—go to the king."

The abbé no longer supplicated, he commanded, and the poor uncle was accustomed to obey. He sprang as quickly as his age would permit into an exterior corridor, precipitately ascended a staircase, and arrived, half dead in the grand gallery. But he did not regret his trouble, for he perceived the king.

The king was talking with the duke de Richelieu in a window He was gesticulating with some warmth, and held the fatal letter in his hand. Without giving Monsieur de Narniers time to open his mouth, he placed it in his hand.

It was as follows:

"Sire,—A great scandal is preparing. The sermon which your Majesty is about to hear is an apology for a connection which you may indeed unhappily lack the courage to

dissolve, but of which I will venture to hope that you do not intend religion to become the apologist.

"Since then there exists a priest who is so forgetful of his duty as to degrade the Christian pulpit thus far, it is for you, sire, to prevent the completion of such a scandal.

"Let your Majesty quit the chapel after the mass. You will give thereby to the preacher, to the court, and to yourself, a lesson which with God's help will not be lost.

"BRIDAINE."

The bishop returned the letter without a word. This name completed his annihilation.

"Is he right?" said the king. "Do you know anything of this letter?"

"Of the letter, no.—But Father Bridaine has heard my nephew's sermon—"

"Has heard it!—Where?"

"In my cathedral."

"The sermon has already been preached!"

"Oh! sire! there was no one there. It was at night.—By way of practice—"

"Ah!"

The king smiled, the marshal laughed. This completed the bishop's confusion and bewilderment.

"You see, sire," he said, "this is a great liberty,—it is treacherous. And what right has a simple priest to write to your Majesty?"

"Every one has the right to warn me of a trap," said the king. "And this, no offence to you, was a trap—"

"But, sire, in God's name! what will become of my nephew? 'I shall be the laughing-stock of the court,' he said to me—"

"And you would have preferred that I should be?"

"Is there no hope, then—none?"

"None. And he knows it moreover, for I have sent him word not to attempt to enter the pulpit."

The bishop retreated with a sigh.

As he drew near the chapel, the sentinel on duty in the corridor saw him suddenly stop, listen, and join his hands with an air of profound amazement. A powerful and manly voice, which was little like that of his nephew, resounded through the chapel. Moreover there was no longer sound or motion. One would have fancied the church empty, so freely did this voice vibrate through it, so loudly did it echo far through the corridors and courts.

LXXVIII.

FURY.—A STRANGE PROPOSAL.

What then had taken place?

The bishop had scarcely quitted the vestry, when his nephew the colonel rushed in, swearing and vociferating, and satisfied with nothing less than cutting the throat of the author of the letter. His brother all agitated as he was himself, had been obliged to quiet him. Incapable of comprehending that the letter might have been dictated by conscience, he looked upon it only as an atrocious insult to his brother, to himself, and to his family.

"But," said the abbé, who was enabled to contain himself by the sight of his brother's fury, "we have not yet read this letter,—we do not know its contents. No rashness until we have found out."

"Rascally priest!"

"What priest?"

"What priest? What! has it not entered your head that it can be no other than your priest of Meaux,—your Father—"

"Bridaine! He! Write to the king! Yes,—in truth—who else should it be? And our uncle does not return! The noise increases! What a position! Good heavens! what torture! And it must be Father Bridaine who—"

"It is he, Monsieur," said Bridaine, entering.

They stood petrified. His glance was not easy to support.

"Monsieur," he resumed, "there is no time now for explanations. The pulpit awaits you. Are you going to enter it?"

"No."

"You complete your disgrace?"

"I am resigned to it."

"Well, do you wish that I should save you?"

"You?"

"Yes, I. Is your manuscript there?"

"Yes."

"Listen. I will take it. I will enter the pulpit,—I will announce that you are suddenly prevented from preaching—that you have put your discourse into my hands. I will read it. I will omit what is evil, and arrange what is good. This is what I propose to you. Do you agree?"

"But—"

"Do you accept my offer?"

"I do."

"Quick—your surplice—adieu."

And scarcely had he put on the second sleeve, when he was already in the chapel.

And only then, greatly embarrassed by his mission, arrived the gentleman whom the king had despatched to the abbé to forbid him to preach.

Bridaine was by this time in the pulpit.

LXXIX.

BRIDAINE IN THE PULPIT.

Few knew him by sight; but he had scarcely entered, before his name, whispered by five or six tongues, was repeated by five hundred. A flutter of curiosity, soon followed by a profound silence, was produced by his appearance in the place where the abbé had been expected.

"My brethren," he said, "the preacher of to-day, suddenly detained, has placed his discourse in my hands. I shall endeavor to supply his place. Aid me with your attention, and may God himself open your hearts to the instructions of His word."

Then he made the usual sign of the cross, and with that voice which seemed attuned to the spirit of Saint Paul, read the text which had been so agreeably marred at Meaux by the effeminate voice of the abbé de Narniers:

"*Nihil aliud inter vos scire volui, nisi Christum, et Christum crucifixum.*"

He began. The audience was all eyes and ears.

"Thus Saint Paul expressed himself; the apostle whom God had chosen to spread among the heathen the teachings, the examples of Jesus Christ."

This was the abbé's beginning, the pathos excepted. The *great apostle* had become Saint Paul; *Providence*, God; the *virtues* of Christ, His example; the *Legislator of Christians*, Jesus Christ, and so on. These slight alterations substituted the Christian for the philosopher, the heart for the head, eloquence for idle words. Just as in music, it sometimes requires but one note added or better placed to give life where it was

wanting; so in eloquence, frequently a word, or a syllable, or an inflection of the voice, completely changes the character of a whole passage.

But it will be remembered that there was more than one place in which only an entire re-construction could change the impious nonsense of the abbé into a Christian discourse. Accordingly, the more Bridaine left the thread of the abbé's composition, the more he felt himself at his ease; but as the *ensemble* of the discourse had been retained by him in his memory since he heard it at Meaux, he was able to fall back again with rare felicity into the ingenious plan from which he had temporarily departed. This sermon, from his lips, was an admirable mixture of regularity as to construction and freedom of detail. He resolved, without knowing it, one of the fundamental problems of eloquence.

He was accordingly himself agreeably surprised, as the sermon progressed, to find what a value it assumed in his hands. Until now profoundly disdaining everything which betrayed art, he was forced to confess to himself that if art by itself is a very small thing, yet when employed by the soul, it is one of the grandest things within the bounds of human reason. He comprehended that neither he nor the fanciful preacher, nor the court preacher, nor the formal preacher, was the true orator, but he who should unite and mould them all into one.

The audience had no time nor inclination to form theories in regard to what they felt, but the impression received was all the more powerful in consequence. They felt themselves in a new world. The preachers of Versailles were not all like the abbé de Narniers; but there was only one Bridaine in France. It was he who was speaking to them now; he who was hailed with joy by those who had heard him in other pulpits; he, in

short, without his usual inequalities, without the defects which would have injured the effects of his eloquence at Versailles.

And accordingly his success was complete, and could only go on increasing.

LXXX.

THREE HEARERS.—"NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS."

But there were three men present, who, under the influence of very different emotions, listened, nevertheless, with equal eagerness.

One was the abbé de Narniers. The door remained half open, and allowed all the accents of this powerful voice to reach him. Seated, motionless, with his hands hanging helplessly, he seemed like a man who, by some wonderful hallucination, was present at the dissection of his own body.

The other was Rabaut. An officer of the prince de Conti had placed him in an elevated tribune nearly opposite to the orator.

The other, who was not known to be in the chapel, was the king. He learned what had taken place, and had ascended by a private staircase into a gallery where he was entirely hidden from view by a curtain.

The first words which he heard belonged to the very passage in which the author had taken so much pains to introduce, under cover of Saint Paul, the scandalous praises of which we have spoken. But how this fragile edifice crumbled away under the powerful hand of Bridaine! How easily were these praises of the master altered to a satire upon the servants! In place of saying that the king was too great, too fortunate, too completely surrounded by magnificence, to give occasion

for such devotion as that of Saint Paul to Jesus Christ, the despised, the crucified, he cried:

"Assuredly this is a devotedness which is nowhere rarer than among you, denizens of the court, adorers of credit and power! And yet, judging from outside show, nowhere is devotedness more common and entire. Yes! nowhere is it better known how to give up everything to one's friends, one's country, one's king. But first,—and frequently there is no pains taken to conceal this,—it must be certain that the advantage to be gained is secure, and not far distant; it must be ascertained that all will be seen, counted, paid! And would that it were only in regard to terrestrial things that these calculations were made! But no,—in religion, as in everything else, interest must speak, payment must be made. You attach no price to the peace and salvation which God causes to ripen in the soul of the righteous, a gradual but never-failing reward for true piety. If you serve God, it is for the sake of men. Your devotion to God is but one of the thousand forms of your devotion to the world!"

Thus spoke Bridaine; but this is only the simple statement of his irresistible subject. It was grand to see how he handled it, stirring up the ideas with his powerful hand, and arriving at length, more inexorably than, ever at this conclusion, apparently so common, but so little comprehended in reality, and so terrifying,—that "no man can serve two masters," and that if he is the friend of the world, he is necessarily the enemy of God. There is no grander sight in the world, than that of the sacred orator chasing a company of men before him, narrowing step by step the space in which he permits them to move, and bringing them all breathless to a stand between the law which condemns and the cross which saves.

LXXXI.

CHARACTER OF SAINT PAUL.—WHERE ARE THE MARTYRS OF OUR DAY? REPLY OF BRIDAINE'S HEART.

Until now however, with the exception of his vehement manner and the impressiveness of his details, Bridaine was in the beaten track. Another might have said all that he had, though with less vigor and zeal. He had not yet arrived, and he was fully sensible of this,—at the true centre of his subject. When Saint Paul says that he wishes to know nothing else "but Christ and Christ crucified," he evidently implies far more than the simple idea of devotion to Jesus Christ as to a powerful and good master. It is the sinner who declares that he will seek salvation through none other; it is human pride which abdicates and casts at the foot of the cross its virtues, its learning, all the false treasures of the old man, all the glories and all the merits of the flesh. It was accordingly in spite of himself that the orator had confined himself, like the author, to the subject of devotion; but this subject already so expanded by his faith and eloquence, had another aspect which was particularly attractive to his imagination and his heart.

The character of Saint Paul,—that type of the apostle, had rivetted his attention for forty years. He had from his youth nourished the strong spirit of emulation, which we saw him feel at Meaux, before the tomb of Bossuet, by meditation upon the life of Saint Paul. The apostle of the Gentiles had become his ideal. Sometimes he fancied that by devotion, labors and prayer, he should come at last to follow in his footsteps, at not too great a distance;—again he seemed to grow greater in proportion to his efforts to emulate him. Then a noble despair took possession of his soul. He asked himself bitterly, where,

in the sight of God, was the merit of these labors without peril. Not that he did not feel himself ready, should opportunity offer, to brave persecutions and death,—but after all the trial had not been made, and who until it had, could be sure of coming off conqueror? He dared not believe in his courage; he dared not be satisfied with a zeal which had gained him honors only. He felt himself forever inferior to him who had never been able to say a word without exposing himself to the possibility of being called to seal it with his blood.

Consequently, whenever he had to speak of Saint Paul, he was agitated by an emotion so deep and true that it could not fail to communicate itself to the minds of his hearers. Although he habitually avoided bringing himself forward, he could not on these occasions conceal this page of his own secret history from the eyes even of the least penetrating. This mingling of enthusiasm and alarm, of discouragement and courage, received from him the most dramatic coloring. Whatever inclination his hearers might have,—as is the case with the greatest number,—to neglect the application of the close of the sermon, they were irresistibly brought in listening to him to say; "If he, after forty years of labor, fears that he has not done enough for his master, what is to become of us, good God! of us who have done so little!"

Such then was the feeling with which, towards the close, he began to delineate the apostle's character. He had gradually laid aside the abbé's manuscript; for sometime, he had no longer even glanced at it. The attention of all was redoubled. He and he only, was now to speak.

We will not follow him through the details of this eloquent peroration. The further he advanced the more he seemed to forget time, place, audience, and even his subject. He seemed to stand alone, before God.

"I approach," he said; "I raise my eyes. The judgment seat is prepared; the judge is seated thereon in his terrible majesty. 'What wilt thou, sinner?' 'Lord it is not I who will. An invisible hand impelled me towards thy throne; a voice said to me; Be thou judged.' 'What dost thou bring? 'Lord, I have labored, have striven for thy glory.' 'Where are thy wounds?' 'I have none.' 'What death hast thou braved?' 'None.' And then I perceive, surrounding the throne, all the martyrs who have died for their faith. And their master casts upon them a look of joy and love. I turn away weeping, and say to myself; 'alas! what right have I to a place among them.'"

"Yes," continued Bridaine, "where are the martyrs in this age of indifference? What blood has flowed? What blood would flow if the axe of old time were again to be sharpened? In vain I demand,—in vain I search—"

Suddenly it might have been imagined that a vision dazzled his eyes and paralyzed his tongue. O Bridaine! Dost thou say "I seek in vain,"—while there, before thee, is a man, a missionary, an apostle, who for twenty years has sported with death. Thou knowest that he has been a score of times upon the point of receiving that bloody baptism which thou dost envy Saint Paul. But behold thou hast made thyself a heart after the fashion of thy church. How shouldst thou call those martyrs, whom she has slain?

He had however, perceived the minister, and the bigotry of the catholic was dissipated by a christian glance. At the moment when he said, "I seek in vain,"—Rabaut seeing him suddenly fix his eyes upon him, had not been able to suppress a half-smile; and this smile, in which were mingled pride, humility, reproach, and pardon, had penetrated to Bridaine's very soul. If he could, he would have thrown himself into the arms

of this man whom his Church commanded him to curse. A holy radiance seemed to him to surround this head upon which a price was set.

"In vain I seek," he resumed, slowly. "But no. Let us leave to God the care of deciding who are his, and who if necessary would take the place of the ancient martyrs. Here, perhaps even here, there are those who would give their life for their faith. Here,—perhaps even here. Let us be silent. Their names are written above. The book will one day be opened to our eternal shame or our eternal glory."

PART II.

A SERMON IN THE CITY.

I.

VARIOUS EFFECTS OF THE DISCOMFITURE.

The next day after the scene at Versailles, the bishop of Meaux was talking with his nephews in his study.

The conversation, as may be imagined, turned upon the occurrences of the previous day. The bishop and the abbé were profoundly cast down; the colonel consoled himself as was his custom, by an abundance of imprecations against all who had in any way contributed to his brother's misfortune,—against the missionary, the courtiers, the king, and against God. Fewer, perhaps, against God than the others, for he believed in him too little to imagine seriously that he was in any way concerned in such occurrences.

The abbé, in spite of his vices, had not been able to rid himself of another feeling. He had certainly not yet gone so far as to thank God for the lesson which he had received; but in spite of himself this lesson had made some impression on him. He vaguely perceived the emptiness and falseness of that eloquence which he had heretofore studied; he understood how far he was from being a Christian orator. But as he felt, on the other hand, that he had neither faith enough to be one, nor

ardor enough to endeavor to become one, he passively allowed himself to fall into a state of complete discouragement. The only person who could have given him a little hope, Madame de Pompadour, had refused to see him after the affair, and he knew that she had but little sympathy for those of her friends who were unfortunate or awkward. He had been very near sending in immediately his resignation of the post of preacher to the king, and would not have hesitated, had it not been for his uncle's petitions and his brother's fury.

And yet beneath all this fury, the marquis was filled with impressions far more profound than those indicated by the helpless discouragement of his brother. His mind, more impulsive, had been more deeply moved; the more hardened he had been, the more he had been shaken. Yet not so much shaken, that he could not still harden himself at least externally. He was vexed to find himself capable of feeling anything besides blind fury. He would have blushed to have it perceived; he blushed to perceive it himself. But some few good seed had fallen among the thorns of his heart, and they might spring up better there than in the dry soil of his brother's.

The bishop, a courtier more than anything else, regarded the whole as a court mishap. Bridaine's sermon appeared to him excellent; that of his nephew not less so. "All styles are good save the tiresome style," he said, with Boileau; and as the abbé's was, in fact, not a tiresome one, his uncle did not see why he should not have the right to preach as he thought best. "Come, come," he said to his nephew, "suppose this were a real failure, which I do not admit, what is to prevent your remedying it in a month. The king will be there, I will wager you. There will be a crowd, and you will be higher than ever."

The abbé shook his head.

"And to think," cried his brother, "to think that all this has happened because the notion must seize Monsieur l'abbé to shut himself up one fine evening in the cathedral. As if he could not have done just as well in his chamber or in the chapel of the house! What the devil was he doing in—"

"In this galley!" said the bishop, who was acquainted with Molière, and never lost an opportunity of quoting him.

"In reality," he continued, "it is more my fault than his. I sent after Father Bridaine, and it was I who brought this poor sermon forward."

"No," said the abbé, "I prefer to think that it was all the will of God."

The bishop looked at him with surprise. The marquis burst into a laugh.

"Ha! ha! see, we are going to turn Trappist—'the will of God!' When are we going to don the cowl, brother Ange?—Poor sermon! It little expected to accomplish such a fine conversion! Let any one say now that the sermon is worth nothing!"

He laughed anew; but like one who strove to forget himself.

II.

A ROUGH VISITOR.—NO ANSWER RECEIVED TO A PLAIN QUESTION.

It was announced to the bishop that some one desired to speak to him immediately.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"A gentleman who would not give his name."

"Let him come in."

"Ah, good morning!" cried the marquis, hastening to meet

the new comer. "You here! You, Diderot! you in a bishop's house! It is like the moon in a well. You think you see it, but it is not there. A shadow, a—"

"My dear friend, if there is any one a shade it is yourself. I met a man about a quarter of an hour from Paris, whom they were taking there to be hung, and that they told me for assassinating the marquis de Narniers."

"That abominable business again!" interrupted the bishop. "What, Henry, you have not had him set at liberty?"

"How could I when he was once taken? You know very well that there is a decree of the parliament of Toulouse—"

"And you will allow it to be executed?"

"Bah! we shall see. Well, Diderot, what pleasant wind blows you here?"

"A tempest."

"The deuce! You have at least left it outside of the door!"

"Yes.—And it shall depend upon Monseigneur whether I send it away, or make it come in."

"Sit down, Monsieur," said the prelate, "I have not for many years had the pleasure of seeing you."

"For nearly twenty, Monseigneur; and my visit to-day has reference to our business at that time."

The bishop did not appear particularly pleased to find his memory so good.

"Monseigneur," he continued, "you will be good enough to allow me to come immediately to the point. At the time when I wrote your mandates—"

"You wrote my uncle's mandates?" interrupted the marquis.

"Why yes— Did you not know it? Then I am sorry to have told it. But—"

"To the point, to the point," said the bishop.

"At the time when I worked for you, Monseigneur, I worked also for others, for my pen, as you know, has always been at the service—of all trades—witness a very nice advertisement I lately wrote, of an oil to make the hair grow—"

"To the point, I beg, to the point!"

Diderot knew how to be brief, but he loved to torment, especially great people. For that matter the story of the oil was true. His style was marvellously well suited to *appeals* of all kinds, and he was frequently called upon to write them.

"I am coming to it," he said. "Among my customers of those days was a certain Aubry, a priest of your diocese. I made him some sermons, and he went to preach them in America. So far so good. But here he has come back, and he is going to publish them, it is said."

"Well?"

"With the name of the author."

"Then their success is certain,—an extravagant success—"

"Extravagant, perhaps, but at my expense. This I have no mind to endure."

"How can you prevent it?"

"I cannot, but I have the good fortune to know some one who *can*, and this some one will, I hope, be inclined—"

"Can you possibly mean me?"

"Precisely. Aubry still belongs to your diocese, does he not?"

"I do not even know where he is."

"That shall be no hinderance to you. He is at Paris."

"Well, what then?"

"What then? Why you will have the goodness to see that these sermons are not published."

"You demand that in a tone—"

"Let us change it if necessary. Will Monseigneur have the extreme goodness to condescend to forbid the said Aubry—"

"Forbid?—Forbid? He is at Paris, you say."

"Well, to have him forbidden then—"

"By Monsieur de Beaumont? We are such good friends!"

"So you refuse?"

"But—"

"Good. Adieu, Monseigneur."

"Already?" said the marquis. "Will you not dine with us?"

"No, I have business. Since my religious works are to be published, I am at least determined that the collection shall be complete."

"You say that you—?" cried the bishop.

"Monseigneur promises me an extravagant success; I wish to take advantage of it. Accordingly the collection shall be in two parts. In one my sermons; in the other my mandates—"*

"You will not do that!"

"Why not?"

"It would be treacherous!"

"So is Aubry's project,—and yet you will not prevent that—'

"The sermons are his—"

"Yes;—

> "They say that the abbé Roquette
> Preaches sermons not his own,
> But I, who know that he bought them,
> Maintain they are *his* alone.

"In that sense, it is clear, that the mandates are yours.

* The bishops of the Romish church publish annually at the approach of Lent, *mandates*, or pastoral letters, which are read by the vicars or curates throughout the diocese. [Tr.]

But I have no time to look so closely at the matter. So, for the last time, you refuse?"

"I do not say so—I will try—"

"Try. But I warn you beforehand that if you fail the mandates shall be made public. Do not shout about the indelicacy of the thing. A drowning man cannot stay to choose how he shall be saved. And I should consider myself drowned,—drowned in ridicule—if these sermons should be published."

"They regard neither law, nor gospel," murmured the bishop. "These infidels—"

"I beg your pardon, Monseigneur,—I did not hear exactly—"

"I said nothing."

"Oh yes, you did say something. Something like 'these infidels—'"

"Perhaps."

"And these infidels, who regard neither law nor gospel are—?"

"You know better than I, I fancy."

"Well, since I know them, shall I tell you something about who they are?"

"Let us hear."

"The infidels without regard for law or gospel, Monseigneur, are not those who do not believe, but those who pretend to believe; those who live, speak, reign, flourish, and persecute in the name of an idea or a thing at which they themselves would be the first to scoff, if they dared. The infidels without faith or law are those—Listen."

He seated himself gravely in the arm chair which he had just quitted. "One day," he resumed, "in a city the name of which I will not mention, I chanced to enter a church. I had never beheld a more beautiful spectacle, and if to be a Christian it is only necessary to love music, perfumes, flowers,

and rich tapestry, I swear to you that for a quarter of an hour I was one. At the right of the altar under a canopy of velvet and gold, was throned a sort of god,—a man so gorgeously apparelled, so surrounded with homage, that this temple seemed his, and this altar, an altar to his glory. Yet I saw him kneel; then taking in his hands a golden urn in the centre of which appeared something white, he raised it above his head. All knees save mine were bent; all heads—"

"We are aware what high mass is," said the bishop.

"Excuse him," said the marquis. "He had doubtless never seen one."

"Well," he said, "I will be brief. In the midst of all this pomp, standing alone in my corner, in the midst of this sea of bowed heads, what calculation do you think I was making? All this,—I thought,—music, incense, lights, splendid vestments, honors paid to the principal personage, all this means—what? That a bit of bread is reckoned to be flesh, not bread. If he who presents this for the adoration of the faithful, believes firmly, sincerely, fully in the reality of the fact, I have nothing to say; if he does not believe in it, it is the most abominable comedy ever played in the world. Well, Monseigneur, do you, who were upon this throne, receiving this homage,—do you, whom I saw,—for it was yourself,—presenting the host for the adoration of the people,—do you believe in transubstantiation?"

And Diderot planted himself before the bishop, motionless, and arrogant as he knew how to be even when embarrassed, and as he was to a most superlative degree when he was embarrassing others.

Confounded, horrified, the bishop stared at him.

"By what right?—" he stammered. "By what right do you come to—to—"

"Yes, what right have you?" repeated the abbé.

"Ah! you too!" said the encyclopedist. "Come, Monsieur le marquis, join the chorus. Ask me what right I have—"

"Yes, what right have you to come and trouble my uncle's peace? I suppose myself, that he has never seriously asked himself if he believed in transubstantiation. He saw every one believe in it—or appear to do so,—and so he did as every one else did."

"What!" said the bishop. "I have not studied the subject? Did I not publish—?"

He stopped short. Diderot smiled.

"A mandate,—you would say? I remember in fact that I wrote you one which treated of this subject. You furnished me with arguments, it is true; but since I was able to develop them without believing a word of them, you must acknowledge that I may be allowed to think you might have given them to me without believing them any more. Come, Monseigneur, tell me conscientiously, and try to think this time that you speak neither to an encyclopedist, nor an infidel, nor an atheist, but simply to a man of sense, conscientiously tell me if when you are there, before the altar, the host in your hand, and three thousand persons kneeling before you, you are fully and perfectly convinced that you present to them a God?"

"A God is everywhere. Why should he not also be in the host?"

"Already a step back! In this mandate, if I remember aright, you make me quote certain decrees of the council of Trent. There, as you well know, the material presence of Christ is taught with hopeless distinctness; and any opinion tending to soften, to spiritualize this doctrine, is as much a heresy as that which would deny it. Accordingly there is no medium. It is not I, but the council of Trent and your old mandate, which repeat my question. Once more, Monseigneur, do you believe that

this bread,—although you cannot help perceiving it to possess after the consecration the same color, form and taste as before,—do you believe that it is changed to flesh? Do you really believe that the words which you pronounced, perhaps carelessly, can have the power to work such a miracle? Do you believe that this wine, which is still the same in taste and color, has become blood? Are you persuaded that a body once the size of yours and mine is entire in this host, in each fragment of this host? And finally, do you believe this body still entire, always the same, capable of existing in a hundred thousand places at once? Answer, me Monseigneur, answer me. Say yes, and I am silent. Here, looking at me, say yes, and I swear that I will believe you."

"But—still—"

"I want *yes*—or *no*."

"You want *no!* Do you dare to think—"

"Very well, say yes then—"

"Stop," cried the abbé, "stop, I implore. My uncle is ill."

And in fact the old man was in a state of terrible agitation. His face was crimson, and his lips and hands trembled. Diderot rose.

"We will say no more, then," he observed. And the abbé heard him add to himself, "He did not say no,—but neither did he say yes."

III.

A DIFFICULT THING FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS TO BELIEVE IN TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Have not many priests, in the secret of their hearts, made the same half confession which an infidel thus roughly extorted from the conscience of a bishop:

When Luther,* at that time a fervent Catholic, made his journey to Italy, nothing wounded him more deeply than to see the priests secretly laughing at the miracle which they publicly pretended to perform. "Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain," they said ironically, in a low voice, at the very altar, instead of the sacramental words.

And are there not still such priests? Do all believe, in the nineteenth century, that which many did not in the sixteenth? We know not, and it is not for us to examine. We will not even say, as some have said, that a priest *cannot* believe in the mass; we say only, (and we shall certainly be so far right,) that it is necessarily more difficult for him to believe than others, since he is obliged to see so closely, to touch, to taste all the impossibilities which crowd around it.

And ought he not to be terrified to find the very smallest doubt in his mind, when he observes the importance which his church attributes to this pretended miracle? The mass has become the summary, the centre, the most important part of worship, and in many respects the summary of religion itself. In like manner as Christ is declared to be incarnate in the host, is Christianity incarnate in the mass. The church does not say so; but in all its precepts and usages, in all it teaches and does, there is nothing which does not tend to nourish this error. The mass, always and everywhere the mass. The mass apropos to everything, the mass to gain every end. From Rome to the smallest hamlet, there is not a church where the building, as a whole, and in detail,—where every thing, in fact, does not proclaim the mass, is not made for the mass, does not exclude from the very first all other ideas save that of the mass.

* What follows is partly taken from our "*History of the Council of Trent.*"

And all this, as Diderot said,—all this pomp, singing illumination, magic,—on account of what is it? A morsel of bread which is asserted to be not bread, but flesh; a miracle of such a nature, that those who have to teach it are precisely those who are in the most danger of disbelieving it.

IV.

THE TWO BROTHERS.—LIVES OF SAINTS.

The bishop had left the apartment. His nephews, after having accompanied him to his chamber, returned to the library; but Diderot was no longer there. He had left a note on the table, containing these words only:

"No sermons, or else look out for the mandates."

"What a man!" said the abbé.

"You cut a sorry figure there," said his brother.

"Can such a man be reasoned with?"

"Reason about transubstantiation! I should have liked to see you try it."

"Why not?"

"Because it is a thing about which, so soon as you begin to reason, you are beaten."

"You are no better than he."

"And you no better than our uncle."

"Well, I call this arranging one's disputes in private! But, joking aside, do you know what I was most afraid of? I trembled lest while he was talking he should happen to glance at this book."

"What is it?"

"You know very well. The Life of Saint Tryphon, by

Father Boidard, which has just been re-printed with my uncle's approbation; or rather with mine, for I gave it."

"Yes, I have some little recollection of the book. But why were you afraid he would see it?"

"Have you read it?"

"Are you jesting?"

"Well, my dear fellow, read it, for it will make you die of laughter. You will hear how Saint Tryphon, shortly after his birth, distinctly pronounced the names *Jesus* and *Mary;* how, when he was seven years old, his guardian angel appeared to him; how, at ten or twelve, when he went to his devotions, the fervor of his soul kept his body suspended six inches, a foot, two feet above the ground. You will learn a new method of corresponding with heaven. It is only necessary to write a letter to Jesus Christ or the Virgin, and to deposit it at night in the wooden hand of your patron saint. Before the next day, the letter arrives without fail at the end of its journey. You may even hope for an answer in writing; for Saint Tryphon had a number of these miraculous autographs. One day, he was taking bread to some poor people. He was accused by some wicked persons of having stolen it. He wished to defend himself. But God had already provided; the bread was changed in his hands into a bouquet of magnificent flowers. A hundred years after his death, he was disinterred, and found fresh colored and well preserved. Then at his tomb all sorts of miracles took place. The dead were raised by dozens, the lame cured by hundreds, the sick by thousands. In short,—but here, here,—take the book, and you will see if I am exaggerating."

"Oh, it is quite enough for me that the book does so. But you have there an hundred copies, I think."

"Two hundred."

"What are you going to do with them?"

"They will be distributed among country curés and convents."

"Not to the women's convents, I hope."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Well, that will be fine! Have you not read this adventure which I chanced to light upon as I opened the book? Stay, listen. 'One day, when the saint'—"

"I know, I know!"

"Why, Diderot and Crebillon* never wrote anything viler!"

"My dear, you understand nothing of the matter. I tell you that our devotees will be greatly edified by it. The intention purifies everything."

"You understand your subjects, gentlemen."

"As if we had created them."

"Do not say *as if*. You have created them entirely; and I will not compliment you upon them."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit!"

"If, to make them blessed, you only require this sort of stuff, then give them plenty of it. For sooth to say, it cannot be difficult to manufacture. But since it is only for the poor in spirit, at least allow people of sense to laugh at it."

"Do I forbid them to laugh?"

"Not you, it is true. Provided they do not laugh too loud, and, above all, not before the people whom you feed with these fine things, you willingly permit all to treat it as it deserves; and if perchance this scorn reflects upon religion itself, you will not concern yourself about that, provided, be it always understood, that appearances are preserved. I can understand how *you* can do all this, since you believe in nothing—"

* The younger Crebillon, author of immoral romances; among others, "Les Amours de Zéokinisul, roi des Kofirans." (Louis Kinze, roi des Frankois.

"Oh!—"

"In very little, certainly. But explain to me how the more pious priests can also make themselves the hawkers of this foolery. For surely, if they do believe more than you in the teachings of Christianity and the church, even in the bread turned to flesh, they cannot believe any more than you in this story of the bread changed into flowers, or the man suspended in the air by the fervor of his soul, or the letters come from heaven, or—"

"Did not Saint Paul say that we should be *all things to all men?*"

"Saint Paul, my friend, according to the little I know of him, was, above all things, an honest man. I have heard you yourself preach on this famous *all things to all men.* You explained it by showing how skilful he was in gaining all hearts by his goodness, his charity, his—at any rate, you did not say, and I think you would have been at a loss to prove, that he ever made use of falsehoods in ever so small a quantity, in his method of winning men."

"Other times, other needs!"

"Are there periods then when lying is permitted? Upon my honor, brother, you make me play a singular part! I fancied I was a famous miscreant, and here I am advocating morals! I have often lied, it is true; I have made vows of love and other vows, which I did not dream of keeping, and what is more, I have repented little of my pranks. But to say coolly that lying is allowable, to call it openly to the aid of a religion asserted to be true, and the only true one,—that is something of which I must confess, I feel myself incapable. I may have been a scapegrace, but I never could have been a priest.

V.

SAINTS.—MANUFACTURE OF SAINTS.

The abbé laughed. It appeared to him really very amusing to hear the marquis talking of morals; he did not go far enough to see how hideous the system must be which revolted even such a man. With what a cuirass does Catholicism surround the conscience of its subjects! For in our days, this cuirass has become thicker and firmer. Books like "Saint Tryphon of Meaux," if not worse, have been spread abroad in the last twenty years, by tens and hundreds of thousands, and among all the clergy, from the humblest vicar to the pope, there is not one heart which appears to be revolted, not one voice raised in protestation!

At last the marquis also laughed. He turned over the leaves of the book, and his eyes fell upon tales more and more absurd on every page. His levity as a libertine had calmed his gentlemanly indignation. This book was for him nothing more than a collection of fairy tales, and he found it, as such, extremely amusing.

And yet it was with a gesture of disgust, that he finally closed the volume, and threw it upon the table. As he had turned over the leaves, beginning at the close, he had at last arrived at the bishop's approbation. There, among the other praises, he had read:

"The charm of the narrative, and the interest of the episodes, with the orthodoxy and piety of the reflections, assure to this work the favorable results which the author had in view. We accordingly cannot but recommend it for the perusal of the faithful throughout our diocese."*

* It was nearly in these same terms that the archbishop of Paris, in

At the gesture which he made, the abbé asked,

"What is it now?"

"Nothing."

"You certainly have a spite against this poor Father Boidard. They say he is a saint."

"Yes, yes, of course. His life will undoubtedly be written also in a hundred years. He will be rewarded for the pains he has taken with Saint Tryphon. But what I just saw was not by him."

"Ah! the approval? It is in fact rather strong, but the bookseller offered three hundred crowns, and—"

"These things pay, do they?"

"As a matter of course. The approval of the bishop secures the sale. Why should not a part of the profit go into the bishop's pocket?"

"Very good. But the good Fathers also have their part, eh? As authors—"

"Ah! their part! It is not necessary that any one should trouble himself about that. They secure it themselves, and all the better because they seem not to be thinking of the matter. With their vow of poverty, they finger more money than we do; with their vow of obedience they are our masters."

"So much the worse for you."

"We must have them."

"And why not abolish them?"

"Child! Are they *abolishable*, I should like to know? The parliament can do nothing with them, believe me, nor the pope either. The order dissolved, the individuals would remain; the individuals dead, the spirit would remain, since this spirit

1846, recommended the *Life of St. Kotska*, one of the most fabulous productions of Jesuit literature.

is, in fact, none other than that of the Church. We must have them, I tell you; we shall always need them or others resembling them. They are somewhat expensive soldiers, sometimes a little mutinous, but they never shrink from anything. Command them to do something which does not suit them, and if you were the pope himself they would find some way of getting off,—but anything which suits their ideas, you can be sure that neither obstacles, dangers, nor anything in the world can prevent them from accomplishing. We recommend these miserable little books which are so serviceable to us among certain people, but we do not write them. A Jesuit is ready to dip his pen in anything you like; ink or blood, gall or mire, no matter to him. Nothing too high, nothing too low for him. Have you some interest in communicating with a peasant? Send a Jesuit to him. A king? Still, send a Jesuit. The pope? again, a Jesuit will serve you."

"Apropos of the pope and the Jesuits, how comes on that affair of Saint— What do you call him? Saint—"

"Eucharion. But do not call him saint. His diploma is not yet signed."

"What a long delay! You have been soliciting it three or four years."

"Three or four years! When I took up the affair it had been going on for more than twenty! It might have lasted twenty more, if not longer; but thanks to Father Pontcarlier—"

"Your agent at Rome, I suppose."

"Yes, our factotum, for every bishop must have one, if he wishes to obtain anything from Rome without a ruinous expense. It is through him that I procure indulgences, dispensations, rosaries, and other articles which have received a bene-

diction; it was through him that I obtained for twenty-five livres the permission not to read my breviary."*

"You might have taken the permission."

"I had taken it in fact, long before; but I thought that it would be better, after all, to go according to rule. It gives one a certain air of austerity, of scrupulousness. When Bossuet was at court, or at Paris, and was obliged from his health to eat meat on fast days, he never failed to ask permission of the curé of Versailles, or of Saint-Roch. The better one obeys, the better he can command."

"Well thought of. You were saying—?"

"That Father Pontcarlier has done wonders; but no money, no—saints. He has just now written me word that there is no more. Two or three hundred louis, he says, are still necessary."

"And you will send them to him?"

"They are already on the road."

"And where did you get them?"

"Out of the bishop's strong box. But we are expecting soon to have a collection taken up, and in that case, we shall soon have the sum replaced.† You do not know what the acquisition of a saint is for a diocese!"

"And did Eucharion belong to this diocese?"

* See a tariff of 1845, copied by a number of journals.

† Two collections of this kind recently took place in France, one at Toulouse, for the canonization of a young girl, *Germaine Cousin*, who died 1660, the other at Marseilles, for that of *Benoit Labre*, dead some sixty years. "To arrive at this result," said the circular of the bishop of Marseilles, "a considerable outlay is necessary. The sum destined for the expense, is exhausted. I accordingly make an appeal to the generosity of the faithful of my diocese, in order that they may aid by their alms the continuation of a process truly interesting for France, which gave to the church the holy person whom we wish to place upon her altars."

"He *lived* here at least, for his name is scarcely French. He was called *Gutgnad*, which means, in Germany, Good Grace. But '*Saint Gutgnad*' would have sounded somewhat harsh; '*Saint Good Grace*' would have made people laugh, like that poor 'Alacoque,' whose suit is also commenced.* Thanks to me, Gutgnad did as the learned men of the sixteenth century did; he translated his name into Greek; he became Eucharion, which sounds well even in verse. This alteration was not effected, however, without trouble. It was under the name of Gutgnad that our subject had obtained the first degree of saintship, the title of *venerable*. 'It was unprecedented,' said the council of the Congregation of Rites, 'for a saint to change his name in passing from the first degree to the others. Money banished the scruples. 'In fact,' wrote Pontcarlier, 'a few ducats more would enable us to change, if you chose, not only the name, but the person.' This would not be such an astonishing thing, moreover, as one might think. In our old chronicles I have discovered traces of four or five Gutgnads, whom tradition, it appears, has blended into one. Our future Eucharion is accordingly a certain creation of the reason, like Hercules of antiquity, formed from the quintessence of several others.† So much the worse for him. So far as we are concerned, it makes no difference, provided that the form is there, and that the people adore."

"*Adore?* I heard you preach on the invocation of saints, and you proved, by a lengthy disquisition, that the church does

* It is not yet completed. In 1788, it was about to conclude, thanks to the edifying efforts of the bishop of Autun, who was none other, it will be remembered, than Monsieur de Talleyrand. The Revolution took place, and the saint was forgotten. Gradually his cause was talked of again; and at the commencement of 1848, it was about to be taken up anew. Poor Alacoque! Poor people!

† Many of the most popular saints are in the same case.

not command that they should be adored; that it is a calumny to assert it."

"In fact, the church does not order it, and the heretics themselves do not pretend that she does; but we are obliged to take for granted that they do pretend it, else what should we have to answer them? We know as well as they do, and better, that all these fine distinctions between *invoke* and *adore* do not hold good in practice. There are but few persons, it is evident, whose devotion to the saints is not a real adoration; few people, very few, incontestibly, who confine themselves to invoking them as intercessors, and who do not pray to them, in reality, as to the Deity. But if these people like to do so, and if, moreover, it is a salutary restraint, why should we trouble ourselves about it?"

"Very good. But what, then, is the meaning of this reply to the heretics: 'We do not command the worship of the saints?' You do not command it,—no; but you place them upon the altar, knowing perfectly well that they will be worshipped."

"Monsieur brother, I did not know that you were so good a logician."

"Monsieur brother, I did not believe you to be so Jesuitical."

"Good! the great word slips out! But, my dear friend, who is not a Jesuit in this world? Many are so for the perdition of souls; why should not we be so for their salvation?"

"Do you think of the salvation of souls,—*you?* Is it for the salvation of souls that you are going to have Gutgnad canonized,—Gutgnad the triple or quadruple,—Gutgnad, who, in fact, never existed,—for you confess yourself that he is a combination of I know not how many monks? Which, pray, of the three or four will receive the petitions?"

"The people will pray; that is sufficient for them. They will pay; that is enough for us."

"I may say now the great word is out! Why did you not begin with that?"

"Because I was relating a story, and did not expect to meet with such a caviller."

"Well, finish your story, then."

"Without further difficulties we arrived at the second canonical degree, the title of *blessed*. But the greatest obstacle was yet to be surmounted. It is indispensable at Rome that a saint should have performed miracles, either during his life, or after his death. The Congregation of Rites exacts that these miracles shall be proved; *proved*, you understand how,—that is to say, they may be perfectly false and absurd, provided that the responsibility of the pope be protected. It is, at the same time, the best way of making the suit last, without appearing to have any motive but a religious conviction. It is sometimes years before some miracle can be hunted up which is wanting to the prescribed number. More than one candidate for saintship has beheld himself condemned to remain forever only *venerable* or *blessed*.

"If we have this misfortune, it will be from an excess of good things. Four or five miracles are enough, and we have more than thirty, each more astonishing than the others, all so prodigious that we dare not quote them. Where, moreover, are the proofs to come from? The chronicler was awkward enough to put here and there, '*It is said:*' his testimonials, in consequence, are desperately feeble. I admire Pontcarlier's skill in this. In the first place,—laying aside the miracles which may be taken up later, when the life of the new saint is written for the people, but which are decidedly too marvellous not to destroy entirely the credibility of the others,—he only cites five or six of the least extraordinary, those which the chronicler thought fit to assert without hesitation.

Then, from some documents of the same period, he has brought to light a few words which seem to confirm these; and out of all this he has manufactured us a memorial, to which, doubtless, for form's sake, a few little objections may be made, but which will finish the affair. Cardinal Braschi informs my uncle that all is going on well—*sano ma piano*,* he says, which signifies that we may have yet to wait a year or two. Accordingly, to inspire us with patience, the pope has sent us some portions—"

"Of the true cross?"

"Of the bones of Saint Juventia, recently discovered in Rome, and which, it appears, are the rage. A volume is to be written, containing the miracles of all kinds which they have already performed."

"It is a superb present, then!"

"There is a fragment of the skull, a finger, a rib, two teeth, and several hairs."

"Mere scraps! What can you do with such things?"

"You shall see."

"And this—Juventia, who was she?"

"Between ourselves I am very much afraid she is a baptized saint."

"Well, would you rather have had her a heathen or a jewess?"

"Profane man, you understand nothing about it. We call *baptized* saints those to whom the pope has given a name because their own could not be discovered. Do you understand now?"

"Yes,—I understand now—less than before. How can it be certain whether these people whose names are not known, are saints at all?"

* Well, although slowly.

"It is known where the early Christians buried their martyrs. Accordingly, all the bones found there are presumed to be—"

"I see. But you will say I am still more profane. Even if it should be certain that these were the remains of martyrs, is it certain that all martyrs were saints?"

"But, my dear friend, you question me as if I had began by saying that I look upon all this as very fine, very wise. Once more,—I am only relating it to you. If you find it tiresome, tell me so.'

"Well,—go on."

"They go, then, from time to time, to the ancient burial places in the catacombs, in order to procure a new supply of saints. Formerly they only rummaged in the tombs which bore certain emblems said to be those of martyrdom; but they have not been so particular of late. The bones are taken out and cleaned, and then they are ready to be sent where it is judged most proper. Demands for them are numerous. Nothing, as you see, need prevent the satisfaction of all these demands, but the pious merchandise would soon have lost its value. It is consequently a signal favor that we have received these few bones, baptized with a name become celebrated from its miracles. I had my choice between these fragments, and a skeleton entire, but without reputation. I hesitated. This skeleton might become that of a great saint; but—"

"What! *Become?*"

"Yes, it has been known to happen. When one has the bones then the story may be constructed; the pope asks nothing better than to see the fructification of what he has planted. Monsieur Basquiat de la House managed well with some he had. He owned a small estate in Gascony, which produced a wine, which no one would buy. Do you know what he did? Being at Rome, as secretary of an embassy, he

had one of these bodies presented to him, and christened by a name venerated in his part of the country. The peasants received it with great pomp. A fete was appointed,—then a fair. And the wine sold well."

"Very good; but it seems to me, that the more taste I had for the worship of saints and their relics, the more I should shudder at the idea of such a mistake."

"Not at all; you would do like the others. It is now two years since my Juventia has been invoked in Italy. Who has dreamed of such a thing as questioning the authenticity of her remains? Free thinkers care too little about the matter to speak of it, and the opposite party are too prejudiced to trouble themselves. Not that there have not been revelations and discoveries from time to time, with which we could well dispense. Father Mabillon, among others, brought forward extraordinary facts.* It appears that it was not found worth the trouble even to read attentively the inscriptions on the tombs to be opened. A certain man, honored as a martyr, was afterwards found to have died quietly in his bed, and to have left, according to custom, an inconsolable widow. A certain virgin martyr, as for instance Argyride, honored at Ravenna, was found to have been entombed by the hands of an inconsolable husband."

"And Juventia," said the marquis. "Suppose anything of the kind were to happen to her?"

"Be easy in regard to that. They do not go so heedlessly to work now. In the place where her bones were found, there was no inscription whatever; but in a neighboring wall, a crumbling stone still bore some half-effaced letters, from which they made *Juventia*. Juventia, according to tradition, was a

* See his famous "*Letter from Eusebius the Roman, to Theophilus the Frenchman.*"

young Roman maiden, who was persecuted by a pagan father in order to force her to abjure Christianity. He finally stabbed her. The story was too dramatic not to be seized and made use of. It was boldly asserted that the relics found were those of a young girl; the miracles soon followed. To make all sure, the inscription has disappeared. So behold Juventia in full possession of her title and honors! More than twenty cities have her relics already. Magnificent shrines have received her smallest remains. I have done still better. I have contrived— But come. I will show you what it is."

"Come."

"I forewarn you that you will see nothing but the two teeth and the hair."

"But—"

"Come in."

VI.

SAINT JUVENTIA.

In the midst of the apartment, upon a Roman couch, was extended the form of a woman. Her face was not visible from the door, being slightly turned towards the window; only her hair was seen, falling in elegant disorder over a white neck and a velvet cushion. A white robe, bordered with purple, allowed the display of one foot, an arm, and a part of the bosom. On the breast above the heart was a small but deep wound, from which escaped a few drops of blood. The robe was stained with it, and the couch also appeared saturated.

"Well," said the abbé, "are you satisfied? There, I fancy, is a relic the like of which is not often seen!"

The marquis stood confounded.

"But this is a jest," he said, "will you place that in a church?"

"Why not?"

"If an exhibitor of wax figures, should dare to make such an one, he would be forbidden to exhibit it."

"And with justice; but with us it is another thing. What, after all, is our object? We wish to render the history of a martyr a little more effective."

"An imaginary martyr."

"Imaginary perhaps, but what matters that? The moral effect will be produced."

"*Moral*—ah! And those in whom this interesting victim might only awaken sentiments—"

"Of which they may relieve themselves at confession. But tell me, is not the idea, in itself, one of the most ingenious?"

"You see that I am admiring it."

"Moreover, it is another invention of Pontcarlier. He even spoke of it to cardinal Braschi, who thought it excellent. Heaven knows how many saints will be thus remodelled! The smallest fragment of bone to insert—"

"What! the bones are in there?"

"Undoubtedly. Do you not understand? The piece of skull is here, beneath the forehead. Here is the hair. There are in all nine hairs."

"They are red."

"Yes. I shall have them dyed, in order that they may not contrast too much with the others. This finger ornamented with the ring is the one in which we put the finger bone."

"This hand is admirably well done."

"Is it not?"

"Where did you find a workman."

"It is another of our dear Fathers. They do a little of everything, as you know."

"I did not know that they modelled in wax."

"They have cast cannons for the emperor of China."

"That is true. And the rib, where is it?"

"There, underneath the wound.—You can distinguish it.—Look—"

"I think I see it—but what color is it?"

"It has been painted rose-color. This was necessary, since the wound is supposed to be fresh. As for the teeth, here they are,—here—under the lower lip. Come to this side and you will see them."

The marquis went on the other side of the couch, but when he was opposite to the face of the figure he burst into a laugh, and began to clap his hands.

"That is it!" he cried, "that is it! There was never a better likeness."

"At last!" said the abbé. "You recognize her? It is a good thing."

"She consented to sit?"

"Yes; but she did not know what it was for. I only told her afterwards."

"And then?"

"She called me idolatrous, impious."

"True,—it *is* rather strong. To put upon the altar in the cathedral of Meaux the effigy of one's mistress."

"Pooh! my dear, three-fourths of the Italian madonnas, which we copy so untiringly, were the mistresses of the painters. Raphael never saw the Virgin any more than I have seen Juventia. If the Fornarina is adored in Italy, Madeline may be adored in France."

"A heretic!"

"A Jupiter at Rome was metamorphised into a Saint Peter."

"Very good. But to sum up the matter. A legend, a few bones, with a little wax over them,—and you have the object before which your people are to be called to prostrate themselves. I confess that I do not see very plainly in what our most holy Church differs from the pagans. Between a divinity constructed from such materials, and one boldly made out of nothing, where is the difference?"

"And where is the necessity that there should be a difference? Christian or pagan, man is the same. For six thousand years he has constantly demanded,—like the Jews from Aaron,—'gods to go before his face.' Well, here are the gods! If we wish to be followed, we must certainly appear to follow the people. What is the matter? You look at me with an air—"

VII.

THE MARQUIS REFLECTS.

And in truth the abbé remarked a gravity upon the features of his brother which was far from being habitual. In spite of his relapses into mirth, as for instance, when he had first seen the face of the saint, he appeared to be thoughtful. The cynicism of the priest revolted the heart of the libertine; his soul, benumbed by vice, was aroused to indignation by contact with this other soul so degraded by hypocrisy. It was indeed the first time that he had sounded the abbé's ideas in regard to religion and worship with any attention. Until now he had been satisfied to look upon his brother, if not as a believer, as a man following his profession; he had not imagined him coolly giving an account of the frauds of which he was the instrument.

The discoveries accordingly produced a singular effect upon

him. If he had been a believer he would perhaps have become sceptical; being an infidel, although he did not become a believer, he began to feel that *this* could not be Christianity, that religion, in itself, had nothing in common with these turpitudes, and that he had perhaps been wrong in not seeking to know more about it.

This last feeling was however still too vague for him to venture upon its expression, especially to a man so little able to comprehend it.

"I have always fancied," he said, "that I had no great opinion of human nature. It appears that the priests respect it even less."

"Because they know it better."

"But why then are there so many fine discourses about the dignity of man, on the excellence of his faculties and his nature?"

"Because we absolutely must have grand words to conceal little expedients. Two ways were open to us; either to raise man to the level of Christianity, or to lower Christianity to the level of man. The second was the shortest and the most certain. We chose it; and you see," he added, casting a complacent look at the new deity, "that we have had no small success."

"No more of that;" said the marquis. "Enough and too much about this image. What is the original about?"

"The original is more intractable than ever. She heard, I do not know how, of the arrest of her Bruyn. After having cursed him so bitterly she still loves him. As long as this man lives, the whole thing will constantly have to be recommenced. Happily he—"

"You are mistaken. This man shall not die. The injustice of it begins to weigh—"

"You are going to save him ?"

"Yes."

"After having him arrested not a week ago ?"

"Yes."

"You are losing your head."

"Perhaps so,—but I am regaining my heart."

VIII.

THE CEVENOL IN PRISON.

While the iniquities of his Church prepared the marquis to repent of his own, his victim, the unhappy Cevenol, proceeded sadly towards Paris between two horsemen of the royal patrol. They had contented themselves, at Meaux, with ascertaining his identity, and he had been sent, as condemned by the parliament of Toulouse, to the prisons of the parliament of Paris.

Not having been able to induce his companions to name the author of his arrest, he remained convinced that it must be Bridaine. This thought oppressed him more than the recollection of all his ills, and more even than the expectation of the torture. So much baseness beneath such compassion, so much dissimulation beneath such frankness, appeared to him, not without justice, to denote the last possible extreme of human wickedness.

When he found himself alone, chained, upon a little straw in one of the damp cells of the Conciergerie, he was surprised to feel himself calmer. This cell was the haven. His adventurous nature took a sort of pleasure in abandoning itself without a struggle, without even a regret, to the grasp of an inexorable fate.

But his was not a nature to remain long in repose. This very tranquillity was to become the cause of torment.

In his perpetual impulse to turn his thoughts within, he had involuntarily begun to ask himself why he was so calm, and had felt that he was less resigned than impassible, less submissive than exhausted. He had been forced to confess to himself that the thought of God had little to do with this peace which had been restored to him.

Then came bitter returning thoughts of his musings and his peace of other days. What a difference between the present and that period when his life was a perpetual offering, when God was his all, when his earliest and latest feeling in all things was to seek and find all in God! He is to die, but stiffening himself against the terrors of death, and not soothing them by holy hopes. He will give up his life without regret, but he no longer has the feelings which would render it an acceptible sacrifice to God. He feels that before everything he ought to pardon him who betrayed him; but he cannot do so, and he is full of horror at the idea of dying with hatred in his heart. Then he too has been a traitor. He has heard himself called *Judas*, and this voice still vibrates in his ears. If he do not receive pardon,—and where shall he go to seek it—he will hear this voice even upon the scaffold,—until he reach the judgment-seat of God.

IX.

A VISITOR.—THE CEVENOL'S HISTORY CONTINUED.

Two days after his arrival in Paris, he was seated in the same spot, motionless and broken,—still wearing out his heart by this struggle without result, and without end.

A sound made him raise his head. His eyes suddenly kindled, his hands were clenched; and the word *Judas*, which weighed upon his heart, fell from his lips, which, though he smiled terribly, were compressed with anger.

The door had opened, and the prisoner had recognized Bridaine.

"Well, my poor friend," said the priest,—but he stopped short.

He had not distinctly heard the exclamation of the Cevenol, and it was not until he came close to him in the lightest part of the cell that he perceived his countenance.

"But what is the matter?" he resumed. "Dost thou not know me? It is I."

Bruyn's glance grew softer beneath the benevolent eye of the priest. A thought—a sudden light—darted through his mind.

"If he should not be the one!" he said to himself.

Bridaine had understood at last. He was astonished that it had not occurred to him what suspicions the prisoner might have had of him. The less a man has dreamed of being a traitor, the less also he dreams of taking any pains to appear as if he had not. But he understood, at the same time, it was no longer necessary he should clear himself. He shook his head with a smile, and put his hand on Bruyn's shoulder, repeating, "My poor friend!" Then he silently went and took his place opposite him upon the stone seat which surrounded the prison.

"It was not you,—God be praised!" said the Cevenol. "Who, then, was it?"

And a gloomy rage again filled his mind.

But without allowing the priest time to answer, he again cried:

"No! I do not wish to know. Wretch that I am! I was

lamenting a moment since that I had some one to curse in dying. God has relieved me of this burden—and I am asking that it should be restored to me! No! do not answer."

"I should not have answered," said the missionary. "Calm thyself."

"But why have you left me so long in this error, which was a perfect torture? When I discovered your name—"

"My name! Dost thou know my name? Who told thee?"

"And the letter?"

"What letter?"

"The bishop's letter. The one which you left on the table."

"Ah! I remember."

"Do you comprehend now? I beheld myself betrayed by him of whom I had spoken, without knowing him, as the only man in his church in whom I could confide!"

"Listen. Since that time I have not lost sight of thee. If they had not brought thee here, I would have returned to Meaux to see thee. But, first of all, answer me. Didst thou, or didst thou not, commit the crime for which thou hast been condemned?"

"I did not."

"God hears thee."

"I know it."

"Repeat to me that thou art innocent."

"I am innocent,—of this crime, at least."

"Well,—finish thy history now."

"What! could you save me?"

"Did I say I could?"

"You will try?"

"Perhaps."

"O God!"

And he burst into tears. The terror of death seized him

again, with the hope of living. But he still struggled. He was indignant to feel himself moved.

"Another humiliation!" he murmured.

"A suggestion of pride!" said Bridaine, severely. "Wouldst thou remain immovable where thy master and mine shrank back? When he prayed to God that the cup might be taken away from him, dost thou wish it to be said that thou couldst drink thine unhesitatingly? But come; I asked thee to relate the rest of thy story."

"I will try. Where was I?"

"At the sermon at Nimes. Thou hadst made confession to a priest,—to me. I had listened with indignation to the manœuvres by which they had made thee a Catholic. I had given thee, not absolution,—for it appeared to me thou couldst not believe in that,—but my benediction."

"I remember. What good it did me! But I was not worthy of it. My soul, like accursed ground, could for a long time only bring forth the fruits of shame and death.

"Thus I had at last submitted to all requirements; I had disgraced myself in the eyes of my brethren by my abjuration, and dishonored myself in my own by the public profession of a worship which I despised.

"I awaited my reward; my reward came not. It had been agreed that Madeleine should be restored to me, and every day came new pretexts for deferring this. They told me that she was so happy in her convent, that she wished to delay leaving it as long as possible, until all should be ready for our union. My love became irritated by these interminable delays. I began to suspect that the opposition came from her side. I trembled lest some new baseness, of which they dared not yet speak to me, should be the price for which they had resolved to restore her to me.

"My apprehensions caused me to meet half way the overtures which they were awaiting an opportunity of making. I went to see Father Charnay. I fell into a passion, but he was not the man to be insulted when he was certain of gaining in the end. He heard me quietly until I had finished; and when I cried, 'What more do you want? Have I not yet done enough!'

"'My dear son,' he said, 'a man cannot do too much to ensure his salvation. You are, God be praised, a Catholic; but who can be so sincerely without wishing that all should become so? The greatest obstacle to our preaching in the provinces is Rabaut the minister. Help us to get rid of him.'

"I thought that I must spring upon him. Betray Rabaut! I! Apostate as I was, I would rather have been cut to pieces in his defence. Charnay did not insist. He had thrown the dart. He doubtless concluded that he had only to let the poison work.

"And the poison was indeed about to work.

"I was perishing of shame, impatience and weariness. Friends and relations had all withdrawn from me. The Catholic leaders granted me only a cold and contemptuous protection. I began to believe there was no more hope,—that the only being in the world who, as I thought, was still disposed to love me, and to share my disgrace, would never be restored to me.

"Accordingly I returned, in spite of myself, to my last conversation with Father Charnay. The price which he had set upon the release of Madeleine still appeared to me, as at first, an infamy the idea of which it was not even necessary that I should repulse, so impossible was it, I thought, that it should ever enter my head to carry it out; but I was startled to find myself wishing that the imposed condition had been a little

less unacceptable, a little less monstrous. I familiarized myself with the idea of another blow to my conscience, provided it were not too scandalous; and like an animal tied, which gradually lengthens its tether, I gradually enlarged the bounds within which I should dare to be criminal.

"I went again to the Jesuit. Why did I do so? I did not explain it to myself; I obeyed I know not what infernal instinct.

"In spite of my transports of rage, he perceived the progress which I had made. He repeated his demand, but this time positively and coldly. I must betray Rabaut or never again see Madeleine. There was, he said, no medium.

"I fled, cursing him. But it was no longer solely from horror of the crime; it was also and chiefly because I began to waver! The struggle, however, was still to be obstinate and painful. The expiation began before the crime; remorse itself is almost a feeling of peace when compared with the torments of a soul which foresees remorse and is terrified at it, and which hastens to meet it. Twenty times these anticipated tortures were on the point of recalling me to myself, to my former days; twenty times, after having by these convulsive struggles exhausted the little strength which remained me, I again fell powerless into the current which hurried me on.

"At length I thought I had found a means of escape. You will remember that I had only become a Catholic by first becoming an infidel. Your sermon at Nimes had reconciled me with the faith; but the little good seed which had then fallen into my heart, had long since been swept away by these internal storms.

"Accordingly suicide appeared to me no great crime. It would spare me one of which I had the greater horror, because I beheld myself ready to commit it. Besides, it was in my eyes

a reparation, as it were, to be made for the tears of my former brethren. They would blame the method, but they would have the sad satisfaction of seeing that away from them I had only found despair and ruin.

"Accordingly one day, decided that it should be the last of my existence, I wandered from early morning upon the banks of the Gard, and strangely enough, in the intense emotions of a last day of life, I found a not unpleasing nourishment. I returned, in thought, to my pilgrimages of other days, when I went into our deserts to offer up my life to God. In vain did my conscience attempt to point out to me the abyss which existed between a sacrifice and a crime. The resemblance of the emotion in my eyes almost effaced the diversity of the circumstances. I wished to *taste* death; I deferred the moment, not from fear, but on the contrary, precisely because I felt no terror, and because I was certain of being quite as ready later as now. I decided at length, that at the moment when the sun should disappear behind the mountain I would step by step enter the river whose waves shortly after should sweep away my body.

"There remained about an hour for me to live. I seated myself upon a rock. The Gard foamed at my feet. The breeze fanned me with all the perfumes of the shore, and brought me all the murmurs of the evening hour. Behind me were some olives and pines, from which the birds saluted the setting sun; before me, solitary, brilliant, and already seeming larger from its approach to the horizon, the orb which carried with it my life.

"The shadows lengthened. Those of the opposite bank already took possession of the bed of the river. From moment to moment the waters flowed more darkly. It was my tomb which was making ready,—and some scattered shadows, al-

ready ascending the rock upon which I was seated, warned me that it was time to descend.

"I arose. As I stood, I was still beyond the boundaries of twilight; the sun granted me a last respite. My dazzled eyes were fixed upon it, but if I had possessed the power to regulate its movements, I would neither have hastened nor retarded its progress. It was necessary, in order to dissipate my last scruples, to abdicate all will. It was no longer I who wished to die; it was the sun who commanded me not to survive him.

"At length the summit of the mountain severed the disk of the orb. The sentence was pronounced, I bowed my head and descended. The pebbles rolled from beneath my feet. My dim vision followed them mechanically to the river, as it now followed the sun to the horizon. Did not they also point out my path? What could I do better than to give myself up, body and soul, to everything which might spare me the trouble and the crime of volition.

"Already my feet had touched the water—and now up to my knees in the river, I only awaited the last adieu of the sun from the mountain, in order to abandon myself to the current.

"But suddenly I raised myself—I uttered a cry—I recoiled. There, opposite to me, upon the bank, where the brilliancy of the sun had until now prevented me from distinguishing any object,—I perceived a man who stood looking at me, immovable, his arms folded. And in this man, I recognized Rabaut.

"How long had he been looking at me? I knew not. His presence in this spot was, moreover, nothing extraordinary. Forced to avoid the thoroughfares, he was most often to be met in the loneliest paths. But since my apostacy I had not

seen him. Although I had met so many other angry or sorrowful glances without shrinking, my most constant apprehension had been that of encountering his; and among the miseries from which I wished to free myself, this had occurred to me this very day, more importunate, more poignant than ever.

"My strength was at an end. This interminable day had exhausted the inmost springs of my being. I had only reserved for the last, the courage to die; where could I find that to live another moment? I felt the ardor which had supported me during a night without sleep, and a day without food, suddenly fail. My knees tottered. I sank upon the sand. A few vague emotions of terror passed through my mind. Then, nothing more.

"When I came to myself I was lying upon a bed. I heard voices speaking softly. Upon my making a movement a man who sat beside me rose. But my eyes were again closed, for I thought I recognized him whose presence had annihilated me on the banks of the Gard. The man spoke.—It was another voice.—It was that of Father Charnay!

"He informed me that I was at Nimes; but he did not add that I was in one of the houses of his order. I had been found upon the highway at a short distance from Gard. It had been perceived, from certain indications, that I had been carried there. By whom? I guessed easily enough. Charnay was impatient to know, but I was silent. I had been received in a village. Charnay was in the neighborhood, and it was he who had me taken to the city.

"He never left me; he overwhelmed me with care, and proofs of interest. I knew him too well not to tremble at his kindness. He never approached me without my imagining that he was going to demand payment for it. And could I doubt that this payment was still the same?

"He introduced the subject at length, but so gradually, that I had worn out, with my continual apprehensions, all the courage and strength which I had regained. I was besides weakened by fever. My nights and days were divided between torturing sleeplessness and overpowering langour, and in the intervals, the faculties which remained were almost useless. The way was prepared for those terrors from which the tempter may expect complete success.

"He commenced by himself appearing full of alarm. He feigned suddenly to become aware of the infidelity by which he had permitted me to be brought into his church, and to shudder at it. I perceived him look at me with an expression of anguish; I heard him murmur aside, the words; 'Lost! Damned!' One day when I awoke, an immense black crucifix was before my eyes, and instead of teaching me to hope in the mercy of Christ, all the tortures of hell were described to me with horrible deliberation. This crucifix, the emblem of salvation, became to me only an emblem of damnation. The night came, and these terrific ideas were mingled with my usual delirium. I felt myself in the midst of the flames; I heard the cries of the damned. Phantoms came and went before my eyes; the Christ, motionless upon his sable cross, looked at me with flaming eyes. Was this but an illusion of the senses? When, long afterwards, I recalled all the circumstances of these terrible nights, I felt convinced that fraud had been used. I have seen more than one Protestant converted in your convents by means of this kind. Why should there be any scruples in regard to using them against us, when recourse has been had to them so often in these institutions, against Catholics themselves, in order to wrest from their excited imaginations, vows which could not be gained from their heart or their reason?

"But it was my conscience which it was necessary to conquer. I must be brought to look upon something which I had hitherto regarded as a crime,—as a meritorious action. My attempt to commit suicide,—the confession of which Charnay had succeeded in drawing from me,—served his purposes wonderfully well. 'A great expiation,' he said 'could alone cleanse me from this crime. Ought I not to count myself happy to be able to profit the Church, at the same time that I atoned for so great an offence against God?' As for the Church, I never believed in it; in God I scarcely believed;—and I abhorred the man who was speaking to me. And yet,—I listened to him, and learned to give myself up to him. I had ceased to will, and in some sort to live; I mechanically sought some one who might think, act, live for me.

"Must I go on? His perseverance conquered. In order to expiate one crime I consented to commit another.

"Accordingly, scarcely convalescent, given up like a corpse into the hands of my pitiless master, I began to seek the means of satisfying him.

"Treachery was rare in our provinces. It was an almost unheard-of thing that a converted Protestant should betray his former brethren. I had, therefore, no difficulty in discovering the time and place of an expected meeting at which Rabaut was to preside.

"It was in one of our *deserts* the most deserving of this name. I knew the place for meetings had often been held there; it was found so convenient that it had been called *the temple*. Five or six paths led to a little plain quite surrounded by rocks, from whose summits our sentinels could see the country for the distance of a league. The outlets were numerous. It would have required at least ten thousand men to surround us with any hope of success.

"It was not accordingly in the place itself that it was deemed possible to capture the minister. But I knew the path by which he generally arrived; I had many a time been his companion in it. This path, winding among the rocks, seemed made for an ambush.

"It was necessary to conduct the soldiers thither. This was not easy, for it would have been sufficient to give the alarm to the whole neighborhood had only one been seen, even within a league of the spot. I led them two by two to the place, disguised as peasants. In ten nights and ten journeys there were twenty lodged in a tolerably large cave which opened a few steps from the pathway. The colonel was among the number. He was not willing to yield to any other the glory and pleasure which he promised himself from this expedition.

"I believed my task finished, but after the last journey I was desired to remain. The soldiers did not know the minister; I was to point him out to them. I implored in vain to be spared this hateful task. I endeavored to escape, but I was prevented and kept in sight.

"There were still two days before the assembly. How long they were! From time to time I succeeded in killing thought, but only to be roused again in a short time under the weight of a terrible anguish. When I remembered that I was there,—I, formerly the example and hope of my poor brethren,—to send their head to the scaffold,—I repulsed the horrible idea each time as one repels a dream. It seemed to me that the dream must at last have an end, and that I should at length know myself once more. Yes, I at length recognized myself,—but only to be inspired with a greater horror than ever! When through this grating I shall perceive the first beams of my last day, it will terrify me less than did among those rocks the dawn of the day which was to behold my crime accomplished.

"The arrangements were made. Several soldiers concealed twenty paces higher up were to close the passage at a given signal. At the same moment those in the cave were to come out, and the minister would be taken by the two parties. They had granted me permission not to make my appearance. The soldiers once out of the cave, I could slip forth, descend the pathway and fly.

"My tortures had already commenced. Looking through a crevice of the rock, I saw passing within ten paces of me, all those with whom in other days I had traversed this same path. Men, women, children, old men succeeded each other in groups, upon the rugged descent of the rock. Few spoke. The greater number were grave and thoughtful. A peacefulness, with which I bitterly compared my wretchedness, was visible upon these countenances embrowned by the fierce sun of Languedoc.

"An old man who had been hidden from me until then by other persons, stopped to take breath. It was my father! He took off his hat and wiped his brow. How much older he had grown! How plainly was my history to be read in his furrowed countenance! I followed with my eyes for a long time those gray hairs of which I was to be the disgrace. He had disappeared and I was still gazing after him.

"I felt my arm touched. 'Is that he?' asked the soldiers hurriedly. I looked. 'No!' I replied. But it was in fact one of our ministers, Paul Vincent. The soldiers stamped their feet; their chief himself evidently had a struggle before he could let such a prey escape. When, however, an instant afterwards they perceived two others, two together, 'Is this he? which of them is it?' they asked, almost aloud; and I thought that they would spring out of the cave without even allowing the pastors time to draw near. 'No,' I said, 'neither

of them.' They were the pastors Encontre and Guizot, the two names, after Rabaut's, most known and venerated in the province.

"I scarcely breathed. Three already! The next must be Rabaut,—for it was rare for more than four to be present at an assembly, and there were more frequently only one or two. Three already! Suppose he should not come? Suppose he should at least come by another path? But no. I felt that I was to empty the cup to the dregs. It should have seemed almost an injustice, if after having been able to consent to the crime, I had not been condemned to accomplish it.

"But it pleased God still to delay the moment. I was not yet sufficiently crushed; I had not yet enough tasted my infamy.

"A woman drew near. She walked with difficulty; but it seemed as if she regained courage as she approached these mountains where she came to seek God. This woman was my mother.

"She passed on. The moment drew near. A few of the brethren who had been detained, and a few trembling old men, were still passing by. The soldiers murmured; the chief grew enraged. I almost began to hope.

"After some moments of silence and solitude, we again heard steps. I looked. A terrible rushing sound filled my head; a hand of iron seemed to compress my brow.

"I had not seen him, but I was about to see him. Four young men, with watchful eyes, advanced cautiously. It was his guard on these important occasions, and I had more than once taken part in it. He smiled at these fears. 'One guardian in heaven,' he said, 'is better than four here.' But in spite of this, they surrounded him with this active care. Even in the assemblies, besides those who kept watch for the

whole, there were always several who only employed themselves in caring for him.

"The young men passed on. I perceived *him*. He was twenty or twenty-five paces behind them. One single man accompanied him. It was Fabre of Nîmes, the father of one of the four advanced guards.

"What then took place? I scarcely saw or heard. He was within ten steps, and I had not moved. 'Is it he this time?' said the colonel. I believe I tried to say no. My agitated countenance had said yes.

"The soldiers convulsively grasped their arms. The colonel, with one foot at the entrance of the cave, prepared to spring out first. But suddenly a whistle was heard. I saw Rabaut stop, draw back, and disappear among the rocks.

"In a second all the soldiers had rushed out. They ran, but Fabre stopped them. Instead of escaping with the minister, he had placed himself in the middle of the pathway. He shouted out that they must pass over his body before advancing a single step. They sprang upon him, and bore him to the earth. But this had taken a moment, and Rabaut was already at a distance.

"Many of the soldiers sprang after him. They searched all the rocks around; they ascended all the eminences. Twenty balls awaited him, in case he could not be taken alive. At last they espied him, but out of reach. He was mounted, and escaping at full speed.

"I had remained annihilated in a corner of the cave. The joy of seeing him saved had not destroyed the recollection of what I had done to betray him. The hand of Providence, so visibly extended for his preservation, seemed to add to my treachery all the horror of a sacrilege.

"The colonel was furious. A soldier of the other post had

been perceived by one of the young men. They had given the alarm, and had been heard to salute the almost miraculous flight of their pastor with a shout of joy. The colonel was ready to run the soldier through with his sword when he heard this shout. I heard his imprecations. The soldiers themselves seemed frightened by them.

"They brought to him the venerable Fabre. He ordered, still with terrible oaths, that he should be kept a prisoner. 'Quick!' he said, 'quick! His hands behind his back. To Nimes!—to Nimes!—and to the galleys!' 'Proceed,' said Fabre. And he held out his hands.

"But his son had remained near him. He sprang before the colonel. 'Not him!' he cried, 'not him! You would take him to the galleys! He would die before reaching them. A man of his age! Do you dream of such a thing? Take me!—take me!' And he had already wrested from the hands of a soldier the cord with which they were about to tie his father.

"The discussion was long and terrible. It was not only the colonel who refused to listen to the proposal, but the old man, who implored that his son might not be heeded. 'I should die before arriving, dost thou say? Well, be it so. I should escape the galleys, but thou wouldst remain there twenty years, thirty years. No, no! You must take me.'

"And the son again implored; and the soldiers paused, uncertain, moved.

"The infamous colonel at length burst into a laugh. 'They want the galleys,' he said,—'they shall have them. Take them both.'

"But he had not concluded, before the son had snatched a sabre from one of the soldiers, and placing his back against a rock, cried, 'Both? Let them try it! I came voluntarily to

offer myself. If they wish to take me against my will, they shall not take me alive!'

"Several soldiers were about to spring upon him with their bayonets. The father then cried, with tears, that he would consent to the exchange. The colonel appeared to perceive that his honor required him not to take a man by force who had come voluntarily. He ordered that the father should be set at liberty, and then the son no longer resisted. But they were not even allowed time for a last embrace. In a moment the prisoner and the soldiers were out of sight.

"The father had not been able to follow them. He had returned, and seated himself on the very spot where his son had given himself up. I saw him; I heard his sobs. And I wondered why I did not dash out my brains against the sides of the cavern! I have heard that in certain countries the assassin is fastened to the corpse of his victim. I was there, fastened to mine. But it was not a lifeless body. I must still be tormented by its sobs and tears, and by looks, which, although they did not perceive me, yet penetrated like burning daggers to the depths of my heart.

"Sometimes I was upon the point of coming out, and throwing myself at his feet, and of confessing all. It mattered little whether he pardoned or cursed me, provided that the horrible secret was no longer sealed up within me. Sometimes, on the contrary, I found some consolation in the thought that he was ignorant of it, and perhaps always would be, and that I alone should curse myself.

"But of this consolation I was soon to be deprived.

"I saw the three companions of his son approach him. I perceived that they had observed the melancholy scene from a distance. They took the old man's hands, and wept in silence.

"'And do you know,' said one of them at length, 'do you know who betrayed us?'

"'Be silent,' said another. 'Why should we tell him?'

"'Why not, my children?' said the venerable Fabre. 'Tell me. It will make the blow none the more cruel.'

"He deceived himself. He shuddered upon hearing my name. He repeated it several times, and I saw that he covered his face with his hands.

"'But who told you?' he asked. 'How is it known? Is it certain?'

"'Too certain,' they replied. 'It is remembered that he was seen one night coming out of Nîmes with two soldiers; and the next morning early, he returned without them. He must have brought them two by two. Come,—let us go in here.'

"I had only time to conceal myself in a corner, when two of them entered. They were Madeleine's two brothers! The other, I learned, had remained with the poor father, who would not enter.

"They looked through the cave. The fragments of food proved the long stay of the soldiers. They discovered the crevice from which the path could be perceived. 'It is without doubt from here,' said one, 'that they watched us. And who knows!—' He paused. 'What?' asked the other. 'Who knows whether he was not there himself to give the signal?' He appeared to shudder at this idea. I saw them go out with precipitation, as if they feared to be contaminated by remaining any longer where a traitor might have been.

"At the first rumor of the event the assembly had dispersed and the crowd fled; but as the departure of the soldiers was immediately made known, many returned. They wished to see this place, henceforth so mournfully remarkable. Fabre was already surrounded by friends. I heard their conversa-

tion, their narratives, and then my name, again and again my name!

"The cave was full of people. I retreated like a reptile into the furthest recesses of my place of concealment. At last I found myself on my knees in a sort of tomb; but I still continued to hear everything.

"There was a great movement, followed by a profound silence. I perceived that they were about to pray.

"A well-known voice, that of the pastor Vincent, pronounced the usual '*Our help be in the name of God;*' but in place of proceeding as usual to the confession of sins, he repeated slowly three times, 'Our help be in the name of the Lord!'

"Never had a preacher said more in so few words; never had more sorrow penetrated through such courage and faith.

"This was his whole prayer. He comprehended that each one had completed it fittingly, and that in prolonging it he could but weaken the touching impression.

"He accordingly opened the Bible, and new blows were to fall upon me. With terror I heard him begin to read in a trembling voice, the history of the Passion. He had not gone beyond the third verse, before all present had already seized the terrible appropriateness of his words.

"'And then,' he said, 'entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

"'And he went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him unto them.

"'And they were glad—'

"A repressed murmur, a shudder accompanied these words. You would have thought from their sorrowful attention, that it was the first time they had heard this mournful story.

"From time to time they appeared to forget me. They followed, with silent emotion, the history of the Saviour's long

agony. But the pitiless historian had not forgotten the traitor, and his name mentioned here and there, as if to cast a shade upon the picture, every moment recalled a murmur to their lips and indignation into their hearts.

"'And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!'

"And further on: 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?'

"I thought that the minister would speak of what he had just read; but what could he have added to that which all felt? He closed the book and joined his hands. He remained a long time motionless, his eyes raised to heaven,—then— But how should I attempt to repeat to you his prayer! Ah! you, in your pompous cathedrals, you know not what it is to pray in a cavern, with captivity or death before you, and two steps from the spot where one of the members of your flock has just been torn from the embrace of a father! And I, the author of the occurrence, found a charm in lamenting with my victims. Treachery, remorse, the terrible future,—for the moment I forget all these. I lived again the life of two years back; I had again found my ardor, my faith, my purity of other days. I should have been able, I felt, to conclude this prayer, so eloquently begun. And I was only aroused to my misery by hearing him pray for me.

"They went away. I had longed for this moment, and now that it was come, I trembled. I was afraid. It seemed to me that I had been present at my own burial, and that the crowd left me alone, cold, in a corner of the grave-yard.

"At length I quitted the cave. The day had begun to decline. I awaited the night in order to depart; but I could not prevail upon myself to follow the pathway. I gained the high road by climbing over the rocks.

"Since my illness I had remained in the house of the Jesuits. Upon going in I desired to see Charnay. He refused to see me, and the next day it was signified to me that I must leave the house. I learned that the colonel had charged upon me the ill success of the expedition, and they desired nothing better than not to be obliged to pay me for my services. I was a poor traitor; these gentlemen do not like half-way blows. When I ventured again to speak of Madeleine, they laughed at me, and I could see plainly that they had never intended to restore her to me.

"The event had caused a great sensation throughout the country. The duke de Mirepoix, governor of Languedoc, offered to release young Fabre from his sentence to the galleys, upon condition that Rabaut should quit the country. Fabre had written to him imploring him to refuse; the pastor had replied, with the unanimous approbation of the churches, that nothing in the world would induce him to abandon his flock. Fabre had been sent to Toulon.

"I no longer dared show myself; the very children had learned to turn away from me. I must die, or expatriate myself. I no longer thought of dying. I felt myself condemned to live, and condemned in such sort, that it would have been useless to rebel against the decree. I resolved accordingly to depart. I had already thought of this when I believed that Madeleine was to be restored to me. I had wished to take her with me in order to seek a repose which she, I thought, as well as myself, could no longer find in our native land.

"I had, as a converted Protestant, the odious right to force my father to provide me with the means of existence independent of him.* I wrote him declaring that I had no inten-

* Edict of June 17th, 1681.

tion of using this right, and that I would rather die of hunger; but I asked, as an alms, some money for the voyage.

"He sent me what I had requested, but without a word of reply. I was prepared for reproaches, but this mute curse caused me more tears than I had yet shed.

"I set out for Bordeaux, from whence I intended leaving for the colonies. I was only obliged to stop in Toulouse long enough to draw from a merchant of that place the amount of the note which I had received from my father.

"This merchant, one Calas, was one of the most respectable and esteemed Protestants in the country. He received me before he knew me, with a kindness which almost surprised me, for I felt as if my history must be written on my countenance. But he had scarcely read my name before a sorrowful amazement became visible on his face. He began silently to count out the money; his hand trembled. At length he asked me, hesitatingly, whether I was a *relative* of him whose *abjuration*,—he ventured to go no further,—had lately caused such a sensation. I cast down my eyes. He sighed, and asked after my father. 'He is as well,' I answered, 'as he can be after—' I did not finish. 'Yes,' he said, 'I know what it is to lose a son.' 'One of your sons has abjured?' I cried. He understood that I rejoiced at this news, as one rejoices to find a companion in misery. He gave me the address of his son, adding that he rarely saw him, although he had never ceased to love him. It was a delicate method of letting me know that I did not inspire him with hatred. I admired a charity which was too elevated for such an aversion; I compared it, involuntarily, with the blind hatred so generally felt among you for the deserters from your church.

"I went accordingly to seek Louis Calas, but I found in him a gloomy bigot, whose conversation destroyed the little catho-

licity which I had retained when with the Jesuits. He completed my disgust by taking a high tone, in opposition to me, for the defence of my conduct. He was not far from congratulating me upon having had occasion to raise myself in so holy a cause above the vulgar laws of conscience and honor.

"I made, however, the acquaintance of his elder brother, Mark Antony, whose character and sentiments were singularly analogous to mine. An infidel, if he had not abjured, it was only from regard for public opinion, and precisely too on account of the advantages offered by an abjuration. We, in our far off mountains, imagined the Protestants of the large cities much happier than ourselves. It is true that you leave them more undisturbed; but how many privations, how many bitternesses are there, which we did not suspect, and of which they experienced and do now experience the maddening influence! They are allowed to enrich themselves by commerce, and many indeed, by means of their strict probity,* do this; but to those who desire more than money, the path is blocked up on whichever side they turn. The magistracy, the bar, instruction, medicine, offices of all kinds, the smallest as well as the greatest, are inexorably denied them; the only thing open to them, besides commerce, is that rude and laborious ministry in which at each step they stumble on the scaffold of some one of their predecessors. But in the cities few possess the courage

* Rulhière, in his "*Explanations of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*," makes a somewhat curious remark. It is that during the first half of the reign of Louis XIV., satires and comedies made no attacks whatever on the financiers, so cried down shortly afterwards. Now during this period, the majority of them were Protestants,

This financial and commercial probity must, moreover have been singularly well established, since at the height of the subsequent persecutions, when calumny was so commonly brought to the aid of violence, this subject was never touched upon.

and strength to enter upon this. They must have been accustomed from childhood to this rude and wandering life; they must have gradually become accustomed to this daily and hourly peril.

"The elder Calas would have had as much courage as any one I believe; but he had not felt himself fit for so solemn a calling, and had from conscientious scruples given up the studies to be gone through for the ministry. Full of talent and ambition, abhorring the obscure toils of commerce, he had seen himself condemned to vegetate without position, without future, in the old paternal country house. Idleness had encouraged vice, vice infidelity. A thousand new torments had filled the fatal void of his existence. Accordingly, as I soon saw, he cherished the design to free himself from it as soon as he should become decidedly weary of its weight.

"Such was Mark Antony at the time when I knew him. In a few days I was his best friend. He persuaded me to remain at Toulouse. There was no need that I should banish myself, he said. I could easily live unknown in so populous a city. I had only to change my name.

"The idea began to please me. I asked nothing better than to stay; but I must live, and how? 'Bah!' replied Calas; 'in a city one can always live.' I insisted. At last, he informed me of a resource, which, as he said, had never yet failed him. It was gaming. 'Gaming!' I cried; 'and if I should lose?' 'You will not lose,' he said. 'But if I should?' I repeated. 'If you lose? Well, you can do—what many others have done,—what I shall also do when I lose.'

"He startled me and I allowed myself to be led. I surrendered myself to vice as I had to fanaticism, without passion, without taste. It seemed if I had coldly taken the part of executor of some inexorable decree pronounced against me.

"Yet it was not without a strong emotion, that for the first time I crossed the threshold of a gaming house. I recalled with horror all I had heard related of these dens, where so many have left their fortune, their honor, their life. The recollections of virtue caused a last attempt to arrest myself upon the verge of the abyss of vice.

"It was in vain; but vice on the other hand, did not succeed in dazzling me, even at the moment when I gave myself up entirely to its dominion. The first day—I said to myself,—I shall gain; the second, I shall lose; the third—we shall see. And in fact, I gained on the first day, I lost on the second, and on the third I returned ready to stake all that remained.

"Whilst I awaited my turn, my attention was suddenly attracted by a too well-known voice,—that of the colonel. He was in a neighboring saloon, where were accustomed to sup, after the games were over, all the most abandoned of both sexes in Toulouse. Without being seen myself, I could see him haranging in the midst of a group; it even seemed to me that I heard my name.

"I gradually drew nearer. He was in the midst of relating his last *campaign*, as he said, and his ambuscade in the desert. He was just completing the account of Rabaut's escape, and how he had taken Fabre instead of Rabaut, and finally the son instead of the father. The audience laughed, and the history as he related it, was not far from being exceedingly amusing.

"But when the audience thinking that he had finished, began to disperse, he said; 'Do you think I have finished? You have not yet heard the most curious part.' They all returned. I slipped through the crowd within three steps of him.

"'You remember,' he resumed, 'the poor simpleton whom we persuaded by means of the name of his Madeleine to do everything we wished. The best of the joke is, that while we

led him on by talking of her, we led her also, but in a very different path, as you will see, by talking of him.'

"And then, to the great amusement of my neighbors, was described the abominable plot which I might have suspected, but which I never could have suspected to be within many degrees so impudently perfidious.

"Madeleine had accordingly daily received news of me, as false as that which had been brought me of her. Long before my apostasy, when as yet I had scarcely begun to entertain the idea, they had announced to her its completion; also that I desired, that I was even anxious, she should follow my example. Stronger than I had been, this first blow had not shaken her. They reserved for her a second. For a long time she heard nothing more of me. She wept in silence, but would listen to nothing more. At length she was induced to ask what I was about; then they pretended that they dared not reply. She insisted. At length they told her that I was married. But the proselyters again gained nothing by their falsehood. She was more blest than I; God remained with her. She wept, but she was not subdued.

"This story aroused in me the most contending emotions. I was happy and proud to find that Madeleine was pure and noble, as she had been of old; but every one of these traits showed me how unworthy I now was of her. But even in the midst of these revelations, in which she appeared to me so courageous and so firm, the triumphant air of the narrator indicated that he was not yet through, and I awaited with increasing anxiety a conclusion which I trembled lest I should find little in agreement with the beginning.

"He went on to relate how, having had occasion to see Madeleine, he had found her to his taste. The part which he played, through his regiment, in the conversions of the prov-

ince, gained him access into the convent. He had been enabled to talk with her alone. He had showed admiration of her steadfastness, pity for her misfortunes. A master in the art of beguiling, he had always remained grave and respectful, and she had finally accepted, without suspicion, the offer of his assistance in escaping from this odious house.

"Accordingly, one night he carried her off. He would take her immediately to her relations, he had told her. Then it appeared to occur to him that she would not be in security there, at least for a time, and he offered her an asylum with a lady of high rank whom she knew by name. 'I did not even speak of accompanying her,' he added. 'She entered my carriage; she saw me respectfully close the door. The trick was played; the bird taken.'

"'Bravo, colonel!' cried a young officer who stood beside me listening.

"The colonel turning, perceived me. I observed him grow pale. He turned to go away, as if the story was ended. 'Go on! go on!' was the cry; and they followed him laughing, for they doubted not that this feigned departure was in order to pique their curiosity. But I advanced in front of the others, and placing myself before him, said, 'Go on, Monsieur!' in a tone which it was soon perceived contained nothing like a jest.

"But this sudden attack had already restored to him his coolness. He stopped and said, with profound contempt, 'Go on? Does Monsieur take me for a man who may be questioned, or who can be induced by threats to speak?'

"'You shall speak!' I cried.

"And I had already seized him by the arm. But his friends threw themselves upon me. Calas, who wished to defend, could not even approach me. In an instant we were expelled from the house.

"I was beside myself. I wished to run to the Hôtel de Ville, to lay my complaint before the magistrates. Calas laughed at me. 'A complaint on account of a scene in a gaming house! A complaint against the marquis de Narniers, the right arm of the clergy in the province!' There was, moreover, he added, a certain sheriff, a sworn enemy of the Calas, who would also become mine, so soon as he knew me to be their friend. In short, I must pocket the offence, or ask satisfaction sword in hand.

"A duel! Another of the things whose very name, from a slight reminiscence of my sentiments of other days, seemed to me an outrage against the holiest laws. But it was decreed that I should trample upon all that I had adored. An hour after, I was at the corner of the street, where, sword in hand, I awaited the colonel's appearance.

"He came out. I went up to him. Calas remained at a short distance.

"'Monsieur,' I said, 'you doubtless do not imagine that the affair can remain here? Answer—or defend yourself.'

"But he, without even stopping, said:

"'These fellows are strangely insolent.'

"Then, half turning, as if towards a beggar of whom he wished to rid himself, he said, 'But, my friend, where did you ever hear of a gentleman fighting with a maniac?'

"I sprang upon him; I seized him.

"'Thou shalt defend thyself,' I repeated, 'or die.'

"Did I really mean to kill him, if he refused to fight? God is my witness that I did not. What would I have done? I know not. But already, as I held him, I asked what I ought to do. I was stronger than he. It only remained with me to stab him; but that alone would have restrained me, even if I had wished to do it. At length I thought that he put his hand

on his sword. I let him go,—and scarcely was his arm at liberty, when a pistol bullet grazed my cheek. But I had had time to see him raise his arm. I had thrown myself on one side; and at the moment when the shot was fired, I heard a cry. In throwing my hands forward to ward off a blow, I had pierced his breast.

"Windows were thrown open; the street was lighted. Calas dragged me away. I remained some days concealed in the house of one of his friends. A search was made in his house, I learned. He asserted that he had quitted me a short time after our expulsion, and neither knew what I had done, nor what had become of me. The affair was carried on, moreover, with great activity. Nothing was spoken of but the attempted *assassination* of the marquis de Narniers. The description of the criminal, as complete as it could be made, had been sent everywhere, and a reward was promised to whoever should discover me.

"Although I had no fear of the intentions of my host, I resolved to leave Toulouse. It was a torture for me to live thus shut up. I must breathe the air of the country, although at each step I might risk my life or liberty.

"I set out. A long beard and tattered clothes gave me the aspect of one of those vagabonds who are allowed by the patrols of the South to beg around the country.

"After having for some days submitted to this half savage life as a necessity, it was to appear to me beneath a new aspect.

"I shall never forget the moment when this strange transformation took place. It was in the evening, on the side of a great highway, in the outskirts of a wood where I was about to seek shelter for the night. Around me were trees; before me were hills, behind which the sun was going to disappear,—the whole scene, in short, of the banks of the Gard! But

there, before my feet, in place of the river which murmured and darkened, was the silent, white road,—the road, now my only home, as the waves of the Gard had seemed my only asylum when I had resolved to end my days beneath them. Then it seemed to me as if I were in the same place, at the foot of the same rock which had beheld me fall when I perceived Rabaut. The road had miraculously covered the bed of the river! The condemnation was written where the crime was to have been committed! My life, instead of ending, was to drag on indefinitely from road to road, from village to village, until the inward voice which had bidden me journey should command me to stop.

"And thus you see how, moving from road to road, from village to village, and from city to city, I arrived in two years where you found me. Never during these two years have I slept in an inhabited dwelling; never did a second night find me in the same spot. Seated at the doors of the churches like the penitents of old, I never have crossed their threshold. As houses of God, I felt myself unworthy of entering them; as the houses of priests, I could not have entered them without horror. And never did a priest pass me that my heart, revolted, did not murmur: 'It is thanks to thee and thine that I am here!' Can you understand now what I felt at Meaux in asking alms of you?"

X.

MADELEINE.

"I can understand," said Bridaine. "Hast thou finished?"

"I have."

"Thou hast not told me all. What has become of Madeleine?"

"I do not know."

"Absolutely?"

"Absolutely. I imposed on myself the determination never to inquire. What should I gain by it? Pure, the remembrance of her would have sharpened my remorse. Lost, I must have accused myself of her fate while mourning her."

Bruyn spoke the truth. He was ignorant of the fate of his betrothed.

We have heard that she was at Meaux. Before going further, we may mention how she had come there.

The marquis had retained her at Toulouse. Free at first, at least in appearance, she had gradually become his prisoner. He found it amusing to put into practice what he had, as yet, only read in romances.

But he gained nothing from all his trouble. Threats and attentions were equally without effect upon the virtue of Madeleine. He soon saw that he must renounce his designs, or else have recourse to means which he disliked to use, for in spite of his resolution he had submitted to the influence of his victim. He was angry at himself for respecting her so much. He was only withheld by vanity from setting her at liberty, and wished nothing better in reality, than to rid himself of her.

It was the abbé who came to his aid. The priest boasted of being more fortunate than the soldier; he asserted that in a month he would have gained more ground with Madeleine than the marquis in a year.

She had accordingly been conducted to Meaux. A month had passed, and the abbé was no farther advanced than his brother.

XI.

TWO PETITIONS GRANTED.

"So thou hast nothing more to tell me?" resumed Bridaine.

"Nothing."

"Nothing to ask me?"

"No,—but stay. Yes,—I have two things to ask you."

"Let me hear them."

"One is to accompany me when I shall be led—"

"Be it so. But I hope—"

"Let us hope nothing. You promise?"

"I promise."

"But it is a friend I want, I must forewarn you. Not a confessor."

"Unhappy man! Wilt thou reject—"

"All that does not come from God. I wish to be taught to approach him,—I do not wish that any one should put himself between Him and me."

"Then thou hast again become a Protestant?"

"I have begun again to be a Christian."

"Christian!—And yet to refuse—"

"All which does not come from God, as I said before. Would you rather that I should be an infidel?"

Bridaine sighed. He could not, in fact, conceal from himself that an infidel, submissive and ready to confess, would have less shocked him in the first moment, than a man refusing his priestly aid from conviction. Rome has always been infinitely more indulgent towards those who do not believe at all, than those who believe differently from her, and it would be very difficult, not to say impossible, for a priest always to

escape this singular impulse. We have seen Bridaine at Nîmes offer Bruyn of his own accord a simple benediction; and now we see him alarmed at the idea of letting him die, without having given him officially—what? A pardon which he knows to be nothing unless confirmed by God.

"No," he resumed, "I cannot. If I accompany thee whither thou wilt,—it must be as a priest."

"Well, let us talk no more of it. I had something else to ask you."

"Say on."

"There is but one pardon in the world which would appear o me in dying an earnest of the pardon of God."

"I understand."

"Let me, before I die, see him who can alone give it. Is he still at Meaux?"

"He is at Paris, but I do not know where."

"Have you no trace?"

"None."

"Then there is no hope. But no,—stay— Do you know Monsieur de Gebelin?"

"The orientalist? No— But if it be only necessary to go and see him—"

"You will go? Well, then, for God's sake go to him. He is the friend of Monsieur Rabaut. He must know where he is."

"I will go? Adieu, my son."

"Adieu, my Father. Your blessing was a comfort to me at Nîmes."

"Receive it again. Adieu."

And the prisoner rose as though to accompany the priest. The noise of his chains warned him that he could only take one step. He stopped.

"You see?" he said.

"What matters it, if the soul be free?'
"Yes— But if it be not free?"
And he again seated himself, sadly.

XII.

BRIDAINE WITNESSES A SINGULAR SPECTACLE.

And yet although Bridaine had almost promised to save him, he did not know how to set about it; he even thought it very fortunate that this glimmer of hope had not dazzled the prisoner too much, for he could not conceal from himself that it might all fade away. Justice in the time of Louis XV. did not easily let go her prey. In spite of the wise regulations which Louis XIV. had mingled with the old customs, they were very far from having been entirely reformed. "When Monsieur de Malesherbes," says the abbé Morellet, "had read my *Manual of Inquisitors*, he said, 'you think you have collected extraordinary facts, unheard of proceedings? Well, this jurisprudence is almost precisely similar to our criminal jurisprudence.'" This was true. The judges were commonly better than the justice, but they were not to be trusted. Every one who was accused was accounted guilty; still more so every one who was condemned. It might happen that Bridaine could touch the judges by an account of Bruyn's sufferings, and that Bruyn would for all that not be saved,—for the honor of the parliament of Toulouse, and of Justice in general. The tribunals had not yet learned to refuse each other these little favors. The life of a man began indeed to be worth something; but far more in the fashionable books of the day, than on the bench or scaffold.*

* The state of the prisons was in accordance with the barbarity of the

Bridaine was moreover ignorant of the favorable thoughts of the marquis de Narniers, but he was none the less resolved to try him. He would go and visit all the councillors in turn if it was needful. He would gain the assistance of the archbishop. He would summon the marquis to speak the truth and confess that there had been no assassination. He would go to the duke de Choiseul, to the king. Did not he know the way?

While he walked, full of these thoughts, through the corridors of the *Palais de Justice*, the smell of burnt paper suddenly attracted his attention. He feared the breaking out of a fire, but no one among the persons in sight seemed to be uneasy in respect to it.

When he reached the top of the great staircase in order to go out, he found himself in sight of the explanation which he wished.

In the midst of the court was a small pile of wood, upon which were some books burning. He perceived that it was one of those harmless auto-da-fés which took place from time to time, for the amusement of the Parisians.

At this moment, however, there were but few spectators

system. The greater number were horrid receptacles where accused and condemned were herded together like the meanest beasts. It was not until the time of Louis XVI. that any attention was paid to the physical state of the prisoners. The abbé de Besplas, preaching at Versailles, drew a picture of it which greatly struck the king. The courtiers were astonished that so many horrors had remained unperceived in the midst of so refined an age.

The hospitals, moreover, were not much better than the prisons. At Paris, three patients were still put into one bed. A century before they had put as many as six.

These details, it may be remarked in passing, are little like what Châteaubriand has related of the marvels of Catholic charity. Protestant countries were already quite different as regards humanity.

either in the court or the streets leading to it. People were seen to approach and inquire what was going on; the thing had evidently not been announced beforehand. There was even an appearance of stealth in the proceedings. A bailiff read the decrees, but so quickly and in so low a voice that the nearest bystanders could scarcely catch a few words. Two councillors in their robes presided at the execution. They seemed embarrassed. One of them especially, seemed to think that the bailiff did not read rapidly enough, that the books burnt too slowly. And more than one waggish clerk slyly observed the effects of this impatience upon the very ugly countenance of the abbé de Chauvelin, for it was he. All, down to the very hangman, seemed to be in haste to get through with it. In place of "*destroying*" the books, as the decrees expressed it, he confined himself to tearing out a page or two, and the fire did the rest.

Not that all these writings which they made a feint of destroying were not bad, detestably bad. The flames had already devoured the "*Chinese letters*," of D'Argens, the *Vision*, of Grimm, the *Christianity unmasked*, of Damilaville, the *Man-plant*, of La Mettrie, five or six anonymous pamphlets where Voltaire's hand betrayed itself in every line, and five or six works signed with the unknown names of people thinking themselves in possession of mind enough to prove that man is a *brute*. The harvest was abundant we perceive, and it must be acknowledged that so long as they must burn, the parliament could not have chosen better. But from the president to the bailiff, from the attorney-general to the hangman, all felt that it was lost labor. Some of them, partisans of the new ideas, only looked upon it as a comedy to be played until the age should be ripe for the predicted regeneration; the others more sincere, understood all the better on that account, the use

lessness of the part they played, and the nothingness of their efforts. From these causes proceeded the embarrassment of all; and also the singular contrivances by which they endeavored at least to escape ridicule, even if they must cast a few grains of incense into the flame where they threw the books.

XIII.

L'ESPRIT, OF HELVÉTIUS.

There remained but one to be burned. Bridaine thought he perceived that the two councillors looked still more embarrassed. The bailiff read low, so low that nothing at all was to be heard.

The passers by had gradually increased the number of spectators; there was almost a crowd. "Louder!" cried somebody. "Louder," repeated several others. Bridaine then bent all his attention to listen. He thought he distinguished the words, *poison*, *philosophy*, *venom*, *esprit*.

"Ah, ha!" said a subordinate clerk, "it appears that it is '*The Mind*,' (*l'Esprit*.) of Monsieur Helvétius."

"Come!" said another. "Hast thou at last discovered that? It is for his benefit that the whole ceremony takes place."

"For him? And what of these others, then?"

"The others are only there in order to keep him company. *Messieurs* were desirous of burning the book, but they did not wish to grieve the author, who is the good friend of almost all of them. Since—thou canst comprehend—he was once farmer of the revenues, master of the household to the queen, and a man of one hundred thousand crowns income! When the poison is in a golden vessel one cannot do less than be polite

in throwing it into the fire. So *Messieurs* resolved to unite in the same batch, all that remained burnable in France."

"And dost thou call that polite, pray? If I were named Helvétius, there are people there whose ashes I should care little to have mixed with mine."

"Well, the name is accordingly not mentioned in the decree. What they wanted, dost thou see, was that the parliament should not appear to have lighted the fire entirely for him. 'You are burning books are you, master hangman? Well, here, since you are about it you may as well burn us up these too without any fuss.' Wait, the clerk is just passing the volume to Samson. Courage, Samson, my friend! Tear, tear,—come! a little more firmness! To-day at least, art thou the executor of all sorts of works!—Good! there is *Mind* in the fire. It burns, but it does not sparkle. In fact, I found it perfectly tiresome."

"Thou hast read it?"

"Six pages, of which I understood nothing, unless it was that in place of calling the work *Mind*, it would have been more honest to call it *Matter*. Ho! what is all that? A man wants to throw himself out of the window?"

In fact, a man had been perceived clapping his hands, in the fourth story window of a neighboring house. Two or three others whose arms alone were visible, endeavored to draw him back, but he leaned still further out of the window, and still clapped his hands, which remained at liberty. At length he was drawn back into the apartment, and the window was closed. Helvétius went on burning.

"Some madman," said one of the two clerks.

"Or some fanatic," said the other, "who has become so from joy at the smell of this burned infidelity. That is all, I think."

"Probably. But no. What is it they are bringing out there?"

XIV.

A STRANGE AUTO-DA-FÉ.

Two bailiffs had rolled up a great bale of books to the side of the smoking remains of Voltaire and Helvétius. Then, in his nasal tone, but this time perfectly loud and clear, like a man perfectly at his ease, the clerk read the following decree:

"The court,

"In consideration of the notification of the king, date 24th of April, 1729, concerning books used by the so-called reformed religion, under whatsoever title, form and denomination, they may appear;

"And in consideration, that notwithstanding the said notification, and the decrees consequent upon the application of the same, there have recently been made divers attempts to introduce these books into the kingdom, in order to spread abroad the poison which the late king of glorious memory had begun to extirpate, and which the king our lord has pursued into its remotest hiding places;

"And in consideration of the verbal process, date May 15, 1760, witnessing that a bale of the said works has been seized in the possession of Master Dumont, bookseller of Paris;

"The attorney-general having been heard in his various representations and requisitions,

"In all things concerning said Master Dumont;

"In consideration of the notification of the king, bearing date August 10, 1685, pronouncing condemnation to fine of fifteen hundred livres, with deprivation of employment, against the booksellers who should hold or sell said books;

"In consideration, on the one hand, that he does not deny having known the contents of the before-mentioned bale;

"In consideration, on the other hand, of his declaration that he has sold none of the volumes therein enclosed, but that he awaited, without even opening it, the arrival of the third, to him unknown party, in order to take possession of it;

"Pronounces that there is no cause for decreeing the deprivation of employment;

"Condemns Dumont only to a fine of fifteen hundred livres, of which falls a third to the king, a third to the Hôtel Dieu of Paris, and a third to the informer, who has demanded, according to the tenor of the ordinances, not to be named;

"And concerning the books seized,

"Orders that the attorney-general shall see that they are carried to the depôt of the court, in order by the executioner to be torn up and burned in the court of the palace, at the foot of the grand staircase, as pernicious and seditious, contrary to the laws and maxims of the religion of the State.

"Given at Paris, July 15, 1760."

During the reading of this decree, the hangman's assistants had restored the fire, and enlarged the pile of wood. The bailiffs emptied the bale. It contained four or five hundred volumes, and, so far as could be judged from a distance, they were all copies of the same work. The hangman took one, then a second, then a third, and threw them one after the other into the flames, after having torn them in two. The fourth time he took an armful, then another armful, and thus he continued. From time to time he tore one. At length all were in the fire, but it was only by means of the faggots of wood that they could be made to burn. The spectators began to laugh, and the two councillors had prudently gone into the

palace. Some of the leaves of the book were picked up, as the wind scattered them, half burned, about the court. Many were highly entertained by them. Some, after having decyphered a few lines, showed them to one another with an air of surprise.

The book which had just been torn and burned by the hangman, at the foot of the grand staircase of the Palace of Justice, in Paris, in the year of grace 1760, was—

Bridaine had picked up two leaves of it, and had with a sigh put them into his pocket. Let us leave them there: we shall find them again.

XV.

THE CHARACTER AND WORKS OF HELVÉTIUS.

Our readers doubtless know from what window came the singular applause which was heard. But from whom this applause came, it remains for us to say.

The guests of Helvétius had been punctual at the rendezvous. The occasion was worth this trouble. Then an invitation of Monsieur Helvétius was never willingly refused, even if it were an invitation to the fourth story, and in one of the narrow, winding streets of the Cité.*

To those whom we saw once before at the house of Helvetius were added, by special invitation, several other members of the sect,—the abbé Raynal, already famous; the abbé Morellet, who was to be so, for he had just come from the Bastile; Saint Lambert, author of the *Seasons;* Thiriot, Voltaire's factotum; and two or three less generally known; among them Doctor Roux, who preached atheism with so much unction and *faith.*

* The island in the Seine upon which stands Notre Dame and the Palace of Justice is called the *Cité.* Tr.

If the neighborhood appeared to them rather dirty, and the stairs rather steep, they could not help forgetting this when they entered. The humble lodging hired by the former farmer of the revenues had been metamorphosed in a few days into a charming little dwelling.

When they had expressed their admiration and astonishment,—for it was not supposed that he had had any other object in view than that of receiving his guests agreeably,—he said:

"Come, you have not yet seen everything."

And beaming with satisfaction, he opened the door of a little kitchen, furnished like the rest,—bright, charmingly neat, and provided with every utensil,—and common utensils, moreover which were evidently not there on account of this breakfast given by him.

"Well, do you guess?" he asked. "I was determined that our frolic of to-day should at least be the occasion of a good deed. In the teeth of the parliament, which is going to burn my book, I install here, no later than to-morrow, a brave lad of my acquaintance, a clerk of Dumont, the bookseller. He is going to be married. He has not a cent except five hundred livres, which have been left him, he says, by a cousin of his. He intended using them to build his nest; and lo! the nest is ready here, and he still has his five hundred livres. He knows nothing of it as yet. I long for to-morrow, that I may see his delight. He is going to invite me to his wedding. I shall go! I shall go! It will be one of my gala days. Ha! ha! Messieurs of the parliament, while you take your method of disgracing me, I must reinstate myself in my own way."

This was the character of Helvétius. It would have been necessary to go very high in the Christian scale to find believers so happy as he to do good; and if he labored as hard as he

could to take from people all hope of another life, it must be allowed that he also neglected nothing that might soften the hardships of the present! Everything about him breathed kindness of heart. With one of the handsomest countenances in France, he pleased without intimidating; he did not like to be with people whom his presence made ill at ease. He excelled in giving without degrading, without wounding; very different from the stout La Popelinière, his imitator, who only succeeded in throwing his money to the dogs, and making his house a tiresome collection of every sort of person. We may add also, that he often allowed himself to be deceived. Is this a criticism, or is it a further eulogium? Just as may be preferred. It is certain that if, in doing good, he renounced the recompenses of heaven, those of earth were not wanting. The whole coterie, from Voltaire to the merest versifier, contended which should sound his praises the loudest. Helvetius was the virtuous man of the day—the living reply to all those who dared to pretend that it was necessary to believe in God, in order to be so. How far did this antagonism and these praises influence his love of goodness? Without these trumpeters, would he have loved it so much? Did he perform good actions, or *splendid sins*, as Saint Augustine says? God alone could see; it is not for us to judge.

As for his weight as a philosopher, it would be superfluous to demonstrate how much his position and services have contributed to exaggerate it. Very few infidels at the present time would like to subscribe to his book; very few indeed would be proud of having written it. They would have no reason, indeed, to be proud of having done so, for such a book could have no success. "The work does not answer to the title. The author takes great pains, to prove truisms, and what he says new is not always true. He outrages humanity by putting on

the same level pride, ambition, avarice, and friendship. There are false quotations in it, puerile stories, and a mixture of poetic style and one puffed up with the language of philosophy. Little order, much confusion, a revolting affectation of bepraising poor works, and an air of decision still more revolting, etc., etc." This judgment is not written by us, but by Voltaire.* D'Alembert, Grimm, Raynal, Morellet, Diderot himself, who had written out more than one page of it, in short all the friends of the author, expressed in private the same opinion of the book, which did not prevent them, according to their custom, from crushing with sarcasms any one who might openly speak ill of it.

Almost all the refutations of it had in truth been miserable; the greater part of them had been no better than the work itself, if not worse.† We have already had occasion to remark how poor France was, in good apologetical works. Among this flood of anti-Christian publications, there were scarcely to be found here and there some works which were not from their weakness, rather calculated to aid the efforts of impiety. In spite of many mandates, whether or not written by the bishops, the best thing to be found was the old *Apology* of Abbadie, which had so much success at the close of the preceding century.‡ Accordingly, this was frequently reprinted. The bishops recommended it, the professors quoted it; they

* Letter to Thiriot, Feb. 7, 1759.

† *Catechism of the Cacouacs*, by the abbé de Saint-Cyr, under-tutor of the royal children of France; *Catechism of the Mind*, by the abbé Gauchet; *Thanks to the Philosophers of the day*, by Rémond de Saint-Sauveur, etc., etc.

‡ *Treatise upon the Christian Religion*, by Abbadie, which appeared at Rotterdam, in 1684. "Until now," wrote Bussi to Madame de Sevigné, "I have not been touched by any of the books which speak of God. But this one makes me value that for which I did not care. Once more,

merely neglected to mention that Abbadie was a *Protestant minister*, and would have perished like any other if he had been caught bringing his book into France.

XVI.

FRENCH JOURNALS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Great, accordingly, were the praises in regard to this *brave fellow* whom Helvétius was going to put into these furnished lodgings. Then they sat down and begun to converse.

The conversation of a party of literary men in 1760, was something quite brilliant. At the present day we talk literature, or politics, or philosophy, or sciences; then, they talked of all these at once, for all were bound or mingled together, and it was even in a great measure on this account that the Encyclopedia, a jumble as it was, of so many things, was the truest expression of the society of the day. In our re-unions, every one, thanks to the newspapers, is furnished with an immense common stock of ideas and facts; then, it was necessary that this common stock should be collected in the re-unions themselves. Every time that people met, they had everything to tell one another; each one had to add to the information of all; and all had something to add to the information of each one.

There were then no newspapers, at least in the sense attached to this word since the revolution. The two publications which resembled them most nearly were the *Gazette of France* and the *Mercury*, and these were still what we should call reviews.

The *Gazette of France* had often changed hands. Sometimes

it is an admirable book. It sets vividly before my mind all that it says, and forces my reason to doubt no longer those things which appeared to it incredible."

free,—with the exception of the *censure* be it understood,—sometimes attached to the department of foreign affairs, of which it then became the official organ, its nature and editorship were generally about the same. It put forth all that the government judged good to publish, or to allow to be published, either domestic, or more especially foreign news. Few articles of weight were found in it, save from time to time a few tirades against the enemies of the French name. There, were to be read the court news, the marriages of high and mighty lords, the entrances of the ambassadors, the great hunting parties, the great balls, the great births and the great deaths. There was often nothing at all said on many subjects about which all would have been glad to read a few lines; but then it was always to be seen at full length how such and such a squadron had made its appearance in the seas of India or Mexico, how such and such a pasha had promised satisfaction to the French standard, how the brave sailors of Saint-Malo or Havre-de-Grâce had taken such and such a number of whales and cachalots, how the Jesuit fathers had just been created mandarins, etc.

The *Mercury* was a little less a government, and a little more a national journal, so far, at least, as there was any nation at that time. The Encyclopedia had a finger in it, through Marmontel; but the Marmontel of the *Mercury* had scarcely the ability to belong to the Encyclopedia. The *Mercury* was more than anything else, a literary journal; facts only appeared there arrayed in high-sounding prose, or in verse more or less piquant. It was he who must narrate after the victories how *Champagne* or *Normandy*, those old types of regiments, had repulsed the Germans, English, or others; he must shout after the defeats, "All is lost save our honor!" which was, be it said, not always true.

We may mention, in order to complete the list, the *Ecclesiastical News*, organ of the Jansenists, the *Literary Year*, of Fréron, the *Journal de Trévoux*, organ of the Jesuits, and one or two other reviews, and we shall have, with the reports of the academiës, all the periodical publications of about the middle of the last century. Nothing daily, nothing complete, nothing which was not necessarily behind-hand with the conversations of every day.

We complain, and not without reason, of the inaccuracies with which our papers abound. But how long do these mistakes last? The greater number, not more than twenty four hours. What one journal misstates, ten others rectify. If it gives you a false piece of news this morning, it will withdraw it to-morrow. The printing of a piece of news moreover, necessarily stops any further alteration of it. If it has the inconvenience of seizing, on their first going off, a multitude of things only half true, it at least fixes them before they have time to become quite false. Then discussion ensues, proofs are brought forward, and it is rare that the most complicated things are not made clear in the course of a few days. In those days, however, there was nothing of the kind. All the labor which now takes place among the papers, and gradually, must be performed in the saloons, and founded upon hear-say,—upon stories which were modified from hour to hour, from one moment to another, according as they passed through more or fewer hands. Some, from indolence, adopted the habit of believing everything, and there was no absurdity which they could not be made to credit; others discussed everything untiringly, and there were few men, even the most serious, whose conversation did not frequently turn to gossip.

XVII.

VOLTAIRE'S IMPLACABILITY.

Our encyclopedists, with the exception of Grimm, had scarcely been together half an hour, and of what had not they already talked!

Two or three subjects, however, had had the first, and the principal attention.

One, the most exciting, was the representation of the *Ecossaise*, which had taken place on the preceding evening, but which had been very near not taking place, for the government had repented having authorized it, and it had been feared to the last moment that the authorization might be withdrawn. An order had been received to change the name of *Frélon* as too much resembling that of Fréron.*

The success had not answered their expectations. A certain portion of the public had applauded, but the real public had remained cool. The peice had appeared weak, very weak, as it is, in fact, and manifestly inferior to that of which it was expected to efface the impression. The '*Ecossaise*' had only served to remind people of the '*Philosophers*,' and make them wish to see or read the latter piece again. If Palissot, in attacking, had not always confined himself within the bounds of good taste, Voltaire in replying had always confined himself to the worst. His Frélon is a sort of brute whose absurd and odious part has not even the merit of being necessary to the plot. It is only a rough sort of patchwork, and a patchwork the sight of which makes one feel too well how all the rest has been made. The five acts, in short, were written in order to

* They had accordingly substituted *Wasp*, the English translation of *Frélon*.

introduce five or six scenes which are more malicious than witty. If this judgment appears severe we must refer to that of Grimm in his correspondence, some weeks before the representation.

The public trial of the piece, had caused all these faults to appear still more prominent; the Encyclopedists felt themselves only poorly revenged. They tried to blame the actors for it. It was because Mademoiselle Gaussin had spoiled the part of Lindane; or Mademoiselle Dangeville had spoiled Polly. Brizard had weakened Monrose; Armand had not understood Fabrice; etc., etc. But they ended by confessing that neither Lindane nor Fabrice, nor Monrose, nor Polly, were after all worth much. They asked with some alarm, if the patriarch was on the wane, and calculated not without uneasiness, the chances he might have of regaining lost ground by his Tancred, then actually in rehearsal.

Apropos to *Tancred*, a question had recently arisen. When Aménaïde is led to the execution must the public perceive the scaffold?

The idea was suggested by Mademoiselle Clairon, who was to play Aménaïde. Opinions had been divided. The decision of the author was awaited with great impatience.

Was this one of the questions whose importance arose out of a want of more serious objects, and the idleness of the disputants?

Not entirely. It contained, as was subsequently perceived, the germ of discussions of a higher significance. *Tancred* without the scaffold was Racine; *Tancred* with the scaffold was Shakspeare.

Accordingly Voltaire had shuddered at the thought. He had written to the actress, forbidding her to dream of it, to his correspondents begging them not to allow it, and Thiriot showed a letter from him containing this passage:

"What do you think of Clairon, with her scaffold upon the stage? Is it not a fine idea to wish to change the French theatre into a *place de Grève?* My friend, let us fight the English, but not imitate their barbarous stage. Let us study their philosophy, let us drive out the Jesuits and the wolves, let us not blindly fight against attraction, nor inoculation, let us learn from them to cultivate the earth, but let us take care not to imitate their savage ideas of the stage. No, no! this abominable idea is only fit for the English theatre. If the scaffold were for Fréron,—well and good; but for Clairon,—I cannot permit it."

"There must always be a fling at Fréron," said Helvétius.

He did not like this inveterate hatred. He advocated war against ideas, he said, not against individuals.

"Always," said Damilaville. "He never lets him alone. See what he writes me on the same day. 'It is not enough to render Fréron ridiculous; to crush him is the great pleasure.'"

"That is very bad, now," resumed Helvétius. "We attack; the others defend themselves. When one deals out blows, why be astonished to receive others in return? Go on. What more does he say?"

"'To crush him is the great pleasure. But all these passions fade before the cordial hatred which I bear towards the impudent Omer. Since I cannot chop off the hand with which he wrote his famous request, I—'"

"Enough," said Helvétius. "It would be very mortifying for us if such lines should come to be known. Monsieur de Fleuri did his duty. He showed more courage in attacking my book than I in writing it."

This was true; but Helvétius was almost the only one who did not give himself up to these bitter hatreds of which Voltaire fanned the flame.

"He takes good care," he resumed, "not to write me such things. I too had a letter. Here it is.* He calls the attorney general "our enemy," nothing more. He consoles me by speaking of the progress made by philosophy."

"And he gives you a curious specimen of it," added d'Holbach. "You would never guess, gentlemen, from whom he has just had a visit at Ferney. Our Omer's own son!"

This was also true. While the father caused the writings of Voltaire to be burned at Paris, the son went to Ferney, to sacrifice upon the altar of the divinity of the day.

XVIII.

PECULIARITIES OF ROUSSEAU.

They talked of Ferney and of Voltaire. And now they talked also of Rousseau.

What did they say of him? They did not know what to say; he became every day more incomprehensible.

His *New Héloise*, his *Julie*, as it was called, was awaited with increasing impatience. The bookstores were besieged with people who asked after it. Its success was certain, more than certain.

"Well," said d'Holbach, "I went yesterday to Montmorency, and found Rousseau more ennuyé, sulkier, more bearish than ever. He had that very morning rudely refused a basket of game sent him by the prince de Conti, with the message, as an additional piece of politeness, that it had been killed by his own hand. Upon the entreaties of the bearer, he kept it, but wrote on the spot to Madame de Boufflers that it

* Voltaire was in the habit of sending off several letters at the same time.

was the last which he would accept. Remark that a few days before, he had received a visit from the prince himself, of which he appeared to me excessively proud, in spite of all his disdain. He spoke to me a dozen times of his *misfortunes*, and a dozen times I tried in vain to make him tell me a little what he meant by it. The Luxemburg people redouble their attentions. The Hermitage is charming; it is the hermit who is crazy. All his good sense is transformed into genius, and slips away at the point of his pen. He will soon not have a grain left. He sees enemies everywhere, traps everywhere, calumniators everywhere. I thought myself the last person of whom he could be distrustful. Not at all. He received me almost rudely. I have been concerned, he gave me to understand, and that with his Therese, in certain plots against him. I thought at first that he meant some plots against his domestic peace, an odd enough idea, when one has a wife who looks as she does, and who is above all, so witty; but no, it was not even that. What was it then, pray? You know as well as I do.* The plots made against him vanish like his misfortunes, as soon as you insist upon his explaining them. I reasoned with him as well as I could. He allowed me to talk until I had finished all I had to say, and then began again, as if I had not said a word. I compared him in my own mind to those people who always think that there is a robber concealed under their bed. They look,—no robber. They go away,—the robber is back again. In the meantime he is profoundly miserable, and will constantly become more so."

"So much the worse for him," said Diderot abruptly.

"You do not like him much, Diderot," resumed d'Holbach, "and he returns the compliment; but we should all be wrong,

* In spite of the *Confessions*, no historian has ever succeeded in explaining the rupture of Rousseau with d'Holbach and so many others.

I think all equally wrong, to regulate our feelings by his. *So much the worse for him!* you said. Well, the more I study him, the more I am assured that we cannot with justice blame him either for his griefs or his faults. He is a sick man, a child."

"A child who thinks himself the only reasonable being in the world."

"Oh! as for that it is true. Never was any man, beneath the humblest exterior, more imperturbably self-satisfied. Others have been as much so, but at least because they believe themselves to be good and clever. But he, in order to tell you that he is the best of men, must begin by relating to you a parcel of turpitudes, which he confesses and exaggerates, and of which at length he accuses himself, with the fervor of a Trappist. His life, he says, has been but one tissue of mistakes; try to save him from making another, and he will resist like a man convinced that he never has made one, and is incapable of doing so. The only way of standing well with him, at least for a few days, is to furnish him with an opportunity of playing the generous. You, for instance, Diderot, he detested yesterday a little less than usual. Do you know why? Duchesne the bookseller sent him the *Philosophers*, in which Palissot tears you to pieces and spares him, Rousseau, in quite a marked manner. Thereupon he expressed great indignation that any one could have believed that he would be flattered to see himself spared at your expense. He replied to Duchesne that he would not accept his *horrible* present; that he had had the *honor* to be your friend; that he could never take pleasure in seeing a *respectable* man calumniated. So far as I know, Morellet, he has never yet said any bad of you, but since he contributed to your release from the Bastile,* you are

* Through the mediation of the Maréchale de Luxembourg.

in his eyes the most virtuous and interesting of men. Do him a service, and he will instantly distrust you. Release him from the Bastile,—if he should happen to be sent there,—and you are his enemy; for the greater the service, the less he will be able to persuade himself that it was rendered disinterestedly."

"He is a paradox incarnate," said Morellet. "One is ready to ask at every line, whether one is dealing with the most lying or the most sincere of mankind."

"If sincerity," said Helvétius, consists in being *actually* convinced at the moment, of the truth advanced, then I think there is no one more sincere than he; if we are only to bestow the name upon one who begins by interrogating himself, in order to see if he really posseses the conviction which he is going to put forth, then I must boldly say that he is not sincere. All that he says, he thinks true; but as for asking himself seriously why,—it is a thing he has never done. Thus it is that he has been able to defend, with equal sincerity, the most contradictory things; thus it is, that all parties can procure weapons from him. His conviction, an entirely instructive one, forms itself from page to page; it remains full and sincere, even when he is going to combat what he has once upheld. From the time he first wrote, what has he done? You know the story. His eye falls, by accident, upon a question in the *Mercury*, proposed by the academy of Dijon: "Has the progress of science and the arts contributed to corrupt or to improve morals?" He decides to enter into the competition. He becomes enthusiastic; he has already sketched in his mind a magnificent picture of the benefits of civilization. He flies to a friend; he excitedly describes to him his subject, his plan. 'It is the asses' bridge,' says the friend. 'Take the opposite theory, and you will see what a fine sensation you

will make!' A new flash! And now he violently attacked the notion he had at first intended to support. The friend was yourself, Diderot."

"It was I. As you say, I had scarcely got the words out, before he was just as much convinced, just as full of enthusiasm as he had been before; just as ready to say *black* as he had been to say *white*."

"But," said d'Holbach, "he denied the story to me."

"He lied!" cried Diderot.

"Hush! hush!" said Helvétius. "We know very well that the story is true. He allowed you to relate it for ten years without dreaming of contradicting you."

"And he dares—"

"Hush! I tell you. Is he a man at whom one can be angry?"

"But if he lies,—it is necessary—"

"To prove it to him? You would not succeed. Remember what I was saying just now. If he has got so far as to deny the thing, it is because he has got so far as not to believe it. Blame his imagination, if you will, but not his heart."

It was thus that Helvétius was accustomed to explain the errors of Rousseau. Is this system applicable to all the circumstances of his life and writings? Let others decide.

As to the story in question, we confess that it appears to us impossible to doubt it. The Memoirs of Marmontel, and more particularly of Morellet, so grave and impartial in his later years, amply counterbalance the tardy denial of Rousseau.

XIX.

THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS OBSERVE THE AUTO-DA-FÉ FROM A DISTANCE.

The hour drew near.

"See, gentlemen," said Helvétius, "they have come to build the funeral pyre. You know we promised ourselves the pleasure of being at table."

Many drew near the window.

"Not so near," he said,—"not so near, gentlemen! One of these bailiffs need only raise his eyes, and—"

"And he would see us," said Morellet. "Well, what then?"

"What then? Why, you might be sent back where you have just come from, Seigneur *Mords-les.*" (*Morellet, bite them.**)

"Silence!" cried Damilaville. "The court enters!"

"Oh no!" said the abbé; "the court comes out."

And, in fact, the two councillors appeared at the top of the grand staircase.

"Take your seats, then," said Helvétius.

And they did so. Damilaville, who sat near the window, could, while eating, have an eye upon what took place.

"Attention!" he said. "They are going to commence. But see! there is one vacant place. Who is still absent?"

"You know Grimm always comes last," said Marmontel.

"He must have time to run about after news."

"Or time to arrange his wig."

He was, in fact, extremely particular about it.

"Or time to be seen by the ladies."

"Or time not to be seen by his creditors."

"Or time—"

* The pun was one of Voltaire's. The fiery abbé proved the justice of it constantly.

"Gentlemen," said Helvétius, raising his glass, "to the health of the parliament!"

"To the health of the parliament!" repeated all the guests.

And the glasses rang, and laughs and jests went round.

"Good!" said Morellet, "good! Health, *sanitas*, which means good sense also, which I wish our gentlemen with all my heart. *Mens sana in corpore sano.*"

"What are they about, Damilaville?"

"The bailiff is reading. Ah! he has finished the first decree. Samson tears a book."

"Which one?"

"Do you think I can see from here?"

"Is it thick or thin, large or small?"

"It burns. But it is too far off. If I had Grimm's glass—"

"What for?" said Grimm. "My glass? What for?"

"Ah! here you are at last! Give him your glass, and sit down."

"Let me at least take a look."

"Do so."

"Have they burned many yet?"

"They are just tearing the second."

"Try to see when my turn comes," said Helvétius.

"Yes, I see now. Ha! who is that priest who has just made his appearance on the stairs? Ah! it is my man of Versailles, —it is Father Bridaine."

Everybody, upon hearing this, ran to the window; for the occurrence at Versailles had made a prodigious sensation. They passed around the glass, in order to see him better. They made a hundred remarks on his figure, his manner, his dress.

In the meantime, the bailiff was reading, the hangman burning. Damilaville had promised to notify Helvétius. He hoped to recognize the book from its shape and binding.

While waiting,—for they had re-seated themselves at table,

—they related to each other many traits, more or less authentic, which have since taken their places in the biographies of Bridaine.

"One day," said Grimm, "when he was heading a procession, he suddenly stopped, and mounting on a stone, began, 'I am going to take you to your home.' They followed him, and he conducted them to a cemetery."

"He is constantly doing such things," said Raynal. "There is not a sermon into which he does not contrive to put something new, piquant, or extraordinary, in order to arouse people's attention. I often heard him at Pézenas."

"What is Pézenas?" said d'Holbach.

"It is the province of my birth, Monsieur."

"And of your *assent* (accent), probably."

"Alas!"

He had often groaned over this unlucky accent, half Gascon, half Languedocian, which had closed the career of the pulpit for him. "I did not preach badly," he used to say,—"but I had a devilish *assent*." Upon what little things, much often depends! Without this accent, he would have devoted himself to the pulpit; he would have had success, great perhaps, for he possessed all the means of gaining it. Born at Paris, Raynal would have become a bishop; born at Pézenas, he became an encyclopedist.

"Nothing could have been more curious," he resumed, "than the first appearance of Father Bridaine at Aigues-Mortes, nearly forty years ago. The people had counted upon I do not know what celebrated preacher for their Lent sermons. When *he* was seen to appear, unknown and insignificant enough in appearance, they plotted together not to go and hear him. On Ash Wednesday, he enters the pulpit. The church empty. He takes a bell, and goes walking about, ringing and ringing, through all the streets of the city. All Aigues-Mortes is

presently at his heels. He re-enters the church, ascends the pulpit, and, with his resounding voice, begins a chant upon death. The people laugh; he goes on his way. One by one the people cease laughing. They listen; at length they tremble; for he has set to work to paraphrase his chant, and pours forth a torrent of images which must terrify the most hardened. His reputation was made."

"I would not be surprised," said some one, "if Father Bridaine should become—if he is not so already—one of those men who live in the imaginations of the people, and whose history, while they still live, is full of traditions."

"In that case," said d'Alembert, "he would be so in common with a man to whom he certainly does not suspect that he bears a resemblance,—him whom you saw at my house last week, Rabaut. He returned to visit me again. I induced him to give me a few more details in regard to the position which he holds among his people. He is really, for these poor people, the hero of an epic. He has constantly to resist the honors which they wish to pay him, and the inclination which they have to give him all the rights of the leader of a party. If he had encouraged them a little, he would have been so long ago. Last year, when our great generals allowed themselves to be beaten, and France could scarcely defend herself on the north, Rabaut need but have willed in order to raise the whole of the Southern provinces, and to rebel, at the head of one hundred thousand men, against the abominable oppression of the Protestants. It must—"

"I think we are ready, gentlemen," interrupted Damilaville. "I recognize the book. They are beginning to read the decree."

"Pass me the glass, gentlemen," said Helvétius. "Yes—That is it—I recognize myself."

His hand trembled. He saw that they perceived his emotion.

Helvétius had relied too much on his strength. In reality, we should say that it was because he did not depend upon it, that he had done so much to drown thought. He had played a part. He thought he should make it easier by selecting the most insolent. The mask fell off in spite of him.

"You smile, Diderot?" he said. "Smile. I should do as much in your place. You know whether I am afraid of that fire yonder. But there is one to whom all this is terrible. One who weeps, Diderot, while we are laughing here. This one—"

"It is his mother," they murmured.

"It is my mother. Because the cause of her grief is—is absurd, shall I not feel a deep pity for it?"

He knew that his mother had gone to pass in a church, this hour, the prospect of which had tormented her for a year. He saw her on her knees praying for him.

They smiled no more. Diderot alone remained sullen. He did not comprehend why the sacred interests of philosophy should not take precedence everywhere and in everything of the old-fashioned feelings of nature and the old-fashioned prejudices of religion. Moreover, this was not the first time he had accused Helvétius of only knowing how to be courageous with the pen in his hand. He looked upon him, like Malesherbes and Buffon, as too much of a gentleman and too rich to be a true philosopher; he liked not that any of them should put on their gloves in order to crush the wretch, and in regard to this extensive cultivation of the old soil of Saint Louis, he would have willingly said, parodying the words of Christ; "whosoever putteth his hand to the plough and looketh behind him, is not worthy to enter the kingdom of reason."

He looked out again. But as they could still hear nothing, he said,

"I should like very much to read this decree."

"Wait," said Grimm, "I got a copy of it. See also—"

"What is this!" cried Diderot. '*Recantation which Sièur Helvétius deposited in the registry of the Court!*'"

"Read it," cried some.

"No, no!" said some others who appeared to have seen it already, and to have little desire that it should be more widely known.

But Diderot read;

"'I have not wished to attack any of the truths of Christianity, which I profess sincerely in all the strictness of its doctrines and practice, and to which I glory in submitting all my thoughts, all my opinions, and all the faculties of my being, certain that all that is not in conformity with its spirit, cannot be truth. These are my true sentiments. I have lived, I shall live and die maintaining them.'"

Diderot, while reading these lines, had interrupted himself two or three times, half suffocated with indignation, and in part from hesitation to believe that the thing was authentic.* But Helvétius sat immovable, with his eyes cast down; he evidently confessed. Diderot contained himself; but he was not a man to do so long. He had thrown away the paper; his lips quivered. "A recantation," he muttered; "a recantation!" Then growing excited: "when do they expect this old idol to fall, when it has but to frown, in order to prostrate them at its feet? A recantation!" And suddenly springing to the window, he cried;

"Bravo! gentlemen, bravo! Burn, burn—since there are still people who are afraid of your flames."

It was then that he had been seen, leaning out of the window, clapping his hands, and resisting, like a madman, all efforts to drag him back.

* It is authentic. We have not changed a single word.

XX.

RECANTATIONS OF THE INFIDELS.

The tears of his mother, the advice of pious and prudent friends, and the indignation of the queen and the dauphin, had determined Helvétius upon this strange proceeding.

Strange indeed would be the history of all the recantations thus extorted from the infidelity of the last century. It is impossible to know which most to wonder at, the foolishness of those who exacted them, or the dishonesty of those who dared to sign them.

Voltaire, the first to attack, was also the first to recant. He did not even wait to be forced to it; he amused himself by being beforehand. He thought it an excellent jest to scoff at all those whose belief he had already scoffed at, by denying his sarcasms, crying out against his calumniators, and professing to be the most devout of believers. See his letters. If those were collected in which he plays the Christian, there would be enough to make a volume. Did he hope to deceive by these? Perhaps so at the outset; afterwards he knew that no one believed a word of them. But after all, what mattered it to him whether he was believed or not? "If I had one hundred thousand men," he writes to the count d'Argental, "I know very well what I would do; but as I have not, I shall commune at Easter, and you may call me hypocrite as much as you will." If he was taken ill, he confessed. If serious threats are made, he will play the sick man in order to have an opportunity to confess. If a stranger comes, of high rank, but religious, who appears to wish to hear his profession of faith, see what he will write him:*

"The great Corneille was obliged to reply to his enemies, that he submitted all his writings to the judgment of the Church.

* Letter to the marquis Albergati Capacelli, senator of Bologna, 1760

"I say the same thing, and it is a pleasure to me, to say it to a senator of the second city in the States of the holy Father; and it is delightful for me to say it upon an estate so near to the possessions of the heretics as mine are. The more I am filled with charity for their persons, and indulgence for their errors, the firmer I am in my faith—etc., etc."

Thus spoke the master; and thus spoke the disciples without scruple, if the weather was a little stormy, and the Bastile appeared to prepare for new guests.

This insincerity was nevertheless too common for us to appreciate it with entire justice. It was somewhat with recantations of this kind, as with forms of politeness. They had, so to speak, passed into the language; each one knew perfectly well, what allowances were to be made. To protest that a man was submissive to the Church, was in the eyes of people in general, no more extraordinary than to call one's self in a letter, the *obedient servant* of one's inferior, or to assure one's *respect* and *consideration* to a man generally despised. You may have seen caricatures, of a man who makes apologies to his adversary, saying innocently, that in insulting him, even in boxing his ears, he had no intention of offending him. Thus acted many people in this vast combat between intoxicated reason and religion degraded. Thus had Helvétius acted, and Diderot must be looked upon as brutal, as a Diogenes, for having taken upon him to think that an infidel lies when he asserts that he is a Christian!

XXI.

WANT OF CANDOR OF AUTHORS OF THE PRESENT DAY.

Those falsehoods have not ended with the despotism which served as their excuse. You will find them still under a

thousand forms in books, in newspapers, and in the language and usages of the present day.

These forms may be reduced however to two; the Christian falsehood, and the Catholic falsehood.

The Christian falsehood, is that varnish of Christianity which is unscrupulously thrown, at the present day, over so many ideas more or less immoral, sentiments more or less false, and theories more or less dangerous. There is in this, it is not to be denied, a certain homage paid to the divinity,—or at least to the beauty of Christianity. Very few books now breathe that brutal antagonism, that deep hatred, by which it was formerly considered good taste to distinguish one's self; reserving the privilege indeed, if *Messieurs* should be angry at it, of writing that there had been no intention to attack any of the truths of religion. Our authors generally try to avoid any reproach of this kind. Instead of waiting for Christianity to be invoked against them, they invoke it themselves; and that which they dare not put forth in opposition to it, they hasten to place under its protection. They no longer assert, at the commencement of an infidel book, that they intend living and dying in the faith, but they will take care, as they go on their way, to scatter about just enough religious words and expressions to delude the ignorant,—and the ignorant in matters concerning religion, as we have already said, are the great majority of mankind, including often those who are the most conscientious and able in regard to all other matters.

And this, as we have already observed elsewhere, causes the success of the second, which we have called the Catholic falsehood. The ignorance of the age in religious matters is nowhere more striking than in the facility with which people pass from one to the other of these.

If our authors are many of them not Christians, they are evidently still less Catholics; if they only accept with privilege

of choice the simplest and most explicit teachings of Christianity, still more largely do they claim the right of choosing among those of the Church. And yet this Church, to which in fact they refuse all authority, this church to which they are perfectly well aware that they do not belong, that they never did belong, that they cannot belong without denying all that they have written; this Church whose pretensions, in short, they know, and which they would deny with scorn if she should attempt to exercise them in regard to them,—this Church receives from them, as they pass on, a thousand little marks of respect; they flatter her as if they feared her. praise her as if they esteemed her, authorize her, in a word, to look upon them as her children and champions.

Accordingly, there are now seen no more of those grossly false recantations formerly forced from fear; but in their stead a thousand recantations in detail, a thousand falsehoods which the Church finds still more to her advantage, because their falsity is less apparent, and because the authors themselves, the greater part of the time, do not pay enough attention to the matter to see that they are falsifying. How many fine things, for example, do we not hear, in regard to unity! And yet, among those who laud it, who openly assert that it is the first characteristic of a true and holy Church, how many do you find who contribute to this unity? How many who are really in subjection to the laws which establish it in appearance? How many who would remain submissive if the application of these laws to them should be attempted?

The Church in fact takes good care not to attempt this; but at the bottom of this toleration there is the same principle which formerly inspired her severities. For a long time she burnt unorthodox authors, and thanks to the Church this custom had so thoroughly entered into the customs of Christian nations, that the Protestants themselves took some little time

to get rid of it. After awhile the books only were burned; the authors escaped all pursuit by means of a few words of recantation. At length they no longer burned either authors or books; it was for the authors to decide what they would offer as their ransom. In an age of liberty it was the best and only method of obtaining anything more from them. Well, this Church, now so accommodating, but so savagely exacting, as long as she had it in her power to be so, is still the same; this velvet hand which she now extends to you, is the same iron one which would have cast you into the flames. The same principle lies beneath her present indulgence and her rigors of former days;—unity at all risks. She knew that she did not convert the people whom she used to burn, or whom she forced to recant; and she knows well that the people whom she allows to say or think that they are her children, are *not* so. In both cases, accordingly, what she desired above all was fair appearance. In spite of the words of Christ, her kingdom is essentially of this world. It is her chief glory, and it will be her chief punishment.

XXII.

HELVÉTIUS BECOMES THOUGHTFUL.—SAD DISCOVERY CAUSING SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

"But you are crazy! Diderot!" cried all the guests.

"Ah!" he cried, when they had dragged him away from the window; "ah! you must tamper with the wretch! You wish to restore her strength to her, and show her that she is very kind not to burn anything more than paper! Very good, gentlemen, very good! But I shall not do it! I shall have nothing to do with it, I swear! Recantations! Recantations!"

And he had already reached the stairs. They endeavored, but in vain, to retain him.

"Let him go," said Helvétius. "Let his anger pass. I was wrong—"

"Wrong in what?" asked Grimm.

"Oh! to pour him out three or four glasses of champagne," said Morellet. "Was not that what you were going to say?"

But Helvétius was still thoughtful.

"A fine commotion," said Raynal.

"And a breakfast finely interrupted," added doctor Roux, who had not left his place.

"The thing is done!" said Damilaville. "The fire is going out. Peace to your ashes!—Ah! another decree?"

It was the one which we have already laid before the reader. It may be remembered that the bailiff found his voice. He was very distinctly heard.

"Protestants?" said Helvétius, sadly. "They do not recant,—the Protestants!"

"Diderot would tell you," said d'Holbach, "that it is because they are neither farmers of the revenues, nor masters of the queen's household."

"He would perhaps be right. But no. If they do not recant, it is because they believe. We only think of man, and we recant; but they think of God, and they stand firm. But listen—'Books found in the hands of Dumont. Fifteen hundred livres fine, of which one-third falls to the informant,—*who has requested not to be named*—' Ah! Good Heavens!"

"That does look badly enough," said d'Alembert. "The third of fifteen hundred livres is five hundred,—just what your *brave lad*, the clerk at Dumont's, has received from his pretended cousin. Another lesson, my dear philosopher! You have prepared this little nest for a viper. What! you are cast down! Did you think that your charities were never bestowed upon any but good people?"

"No; but—"

He hesitated.

"But what?"

"Gentlemen," interrupted Grimm, "I forgot to tell you, apropos to Father Bridaine, that he is to preach on Monday at Saint-Sulpice. All Paris will be there."

"And all Versailles," added Damilaville.

"Shall we go?"

"Why not?"

"It is understood, then. Who will bring Diderot?"

"I will take it upon me," said Morellet.

"Good. It will suit him, since he belongs to the trade."

"To the trade? Diderot?"

The story of the six sermons was related. Grimm added the account of the journey to Meaux, and the visit to the bishop.

The books were still burning. Puffs of smoke came from time to time through the window. They closed it, and went on talking.

But nothing could amuse Helvétius. He hardly listened, and scarcely answered. They at length went away, and he was left alone with d'Alembert.

"But what is the matter with you?" said the latter. "You must have been very much interested in this young man, since you are so troubled at having discovered—"

"I myself, d'Alembert, am the guilty one."

"You?"

"This young man, a year ago, was a model of fidelity. I was so unfortunate as to lend him my book."

"Your book? Well, in that you advocate nothing but virtue, disinterestedness, honesty."

Helvétius shook his head.

"Virtue—virtue. Yes, in fact, this word occurs very often in the book. It remains to be seen whether, with our principles, it can be anything more than a word."

"These are scruples—"

"Too well founded, d'Alembert. This young man believed in God; he does so no longer."

"It is not your fault, then. You do not teach atheism."

"Not entirely. But it might be questioned whether, in our systems, God is really anything more than a word. As for myself, I have more than once confessed to myself, while writing, that if I spoke of Him, it was—what shall I call it?—from complaisance, from politeness, as it were. God, you see, is necessarily all or nothing. If it is not He who moves the car, He is nothing more than a fifth wheel. Well, in spite of all our fine speeches, we reduce Him to this lowest position. So long as we only theorize, we may deceive ourselves in respect to this: it may be fancied, if our tirades are believed, that we believe in God. But let an opportunity come for acting as if we did not believe in Him, and see then what will happen."

"*Messieurs* of the parliament," said d'Alembert, "would doubtless be agreeably surprised if they learned that their decree had led you to make such reflections."

"I am not one of those," resumed Helvétius, "who think that a book is good, only because it is condemned to be burned. Besides, as you have seen, it is not the condemnation of the parliament which has caused these sad reflections; it is another condemnation much more conclusive, which this wretched man has pronounced by showing the effects which the reading of my book has produced upon him. D'Alembert, you talk in vain. This is a worse chastisement than all the censures and decrees in the world. If this God whom we dethrone really exists, do you know what would be the best thing He could do to punish us?" "Well—what?"

"To allow us to live another century, and to make us assist in harvesting the tempests which we are now sowing."

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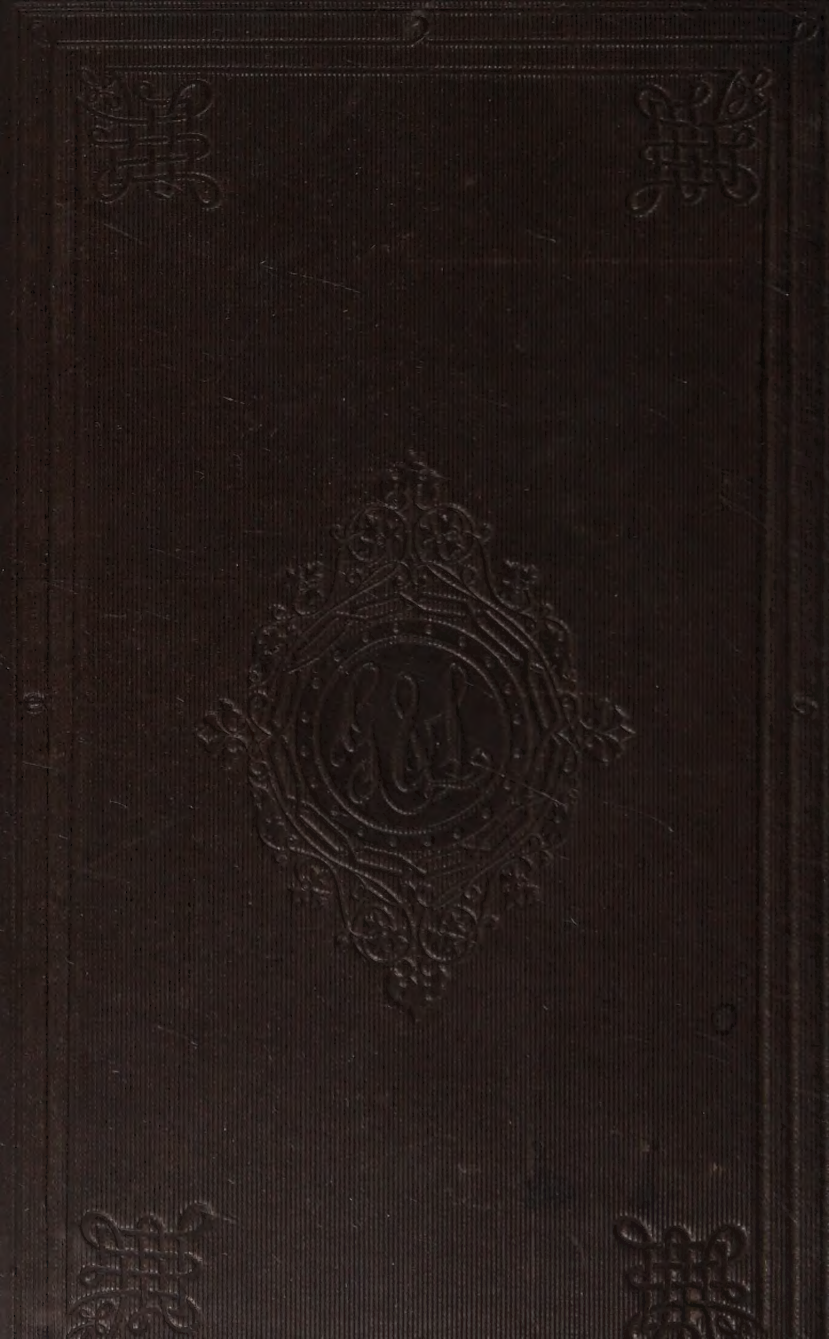
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